



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

1. Please identify your organization, and briefly explain its (direct or indirect) role in the provision of water and sanitation humanitarian assistance to forcibly displaced people (within or across borders).

A:

International Organization for Migration – IOM.

IOM recognizes that access to water and sanitation services, paired with hygiene promotion, is life-saving in humanitarian contexts, while sustainable access to water and sanitation services is also critical in the context of resolving displacement situations and building resilience to future shocks and stressors. IOM provides life-saving and longer-term Water, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion (WASH) services directly, as well through partners or coordinating with other actors for an appropriate response. IOM is currently undertaking WASH in some 29 countries, placing IOM among the top 5 largest WASH agencies by funding and beneficiaries reached. IOM's comprehensive projects are designed to meet the basic requirements of water for populations in need, by constructing or rehabilitating water supply systems for the provision of safe drinking water. Regarding sanitation, IOM constructs latrines and bathing facilities appropriate for the safety and dignity requirements of the population, and establishes appropriate waste management systems. Both water and sanitation interventions are strengthened through a systematic promotion of hygiene. In addition, IOM establishes appropriate operation and management approaches to ensure that the populations in need have unrestricted and equitable access to the services provided.

2. What is your assessment of preparedness, resilience and adaptability of the existing water and sanitation services, including contingency plans and special budget, in the countries you are working? Please share lessons learnt, and good practices in this regard.

A:

IOM implements WASH projects primarily in protracted crisis contexts, such as in South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Yemen, where recurring crisis (man-made or natural) have resulted in a particularly vulnerable water and sanitation set-up.

Water and sanitation set ups are more resilient and flexible to cope with new threats, where there is a higher level of governance and environment that promotes the implementation of sustainable solutions, such as in Pakistan, Indonesia, Uganda and Bangladesh. In these countries, where IOM undertakes WASH projects, Governments are involved in the development of contingency plans as much as possible along with other aid agencies. Nevertheless, contingency plans are usually not backed by the necessary funding and thus the realization of these are limited to the advocacy and fundraising capacity of the organizations.

To the extent possible, IOM projects provide WASH services that are adaptable and resilient. By improving and strengthening water and sanitation infrastructures and by establishing mechanisms, the projects aim to provide beneficiary communities with the means to endure future shocks. However, there is a concern that the impact and ongoing benefit of these endeavors is contingent upon IOM's continued support of these mechanisms, which is tied to donor funding. While funding is often high at the onset of emergencies, it often declines faster than the time needed to make the gains sustainable.

In South Sudan and Somalia, IOM constructs and rehabilitates water infrastructure and further provides tool kits, materials and trainings to community members so that they can provide the regular maintenance and repair of the water points. In the protection of civilians (PoC) site in Malakal in South Sudan, IOM supported the internally displaced persons form committees (hygiene committees) to take care of the cleaning of latrines and collecting garbage. In instances when violence erupts and there is a disruption of humanitarian presence, such as the inter-communal clashes in February 2016 when IOM WASH teams were unable to access the site, these committees continued to provide WASH services beyond their initial competences, and ensured that the site remained free of risk of any possible water borne disease outbreak.

3. How has the international recognition of water and sanitation as human rights by the United Nations informed your organization's water and sanitation humanitarian policies and programmes and how does it contribute to improve preparedness and resilience of water and sanitation services in future emergencies?

A:

For IOM, the provision of WASH services as a life-saving measure and the rehabilitation of sustainable WASH infrastructure in support of recovery and stabilization is a principal aspect of the Organization's comprehensive approach to crisis prevention and response. IOM advocates through all channels possible to ensure that communities in distress receive the basic requirements in water and sanitation services, and when feasible and appropriate, IOM implements actions to meet the gaps in water and sanitation that the government or other aid agencies have been unable to address.

4. How are water and sanitation prioritized in your organization's overall budget for humanitarian assistance? How has the lack of human and financial resources affected your organization's water and sanitation humanitarian response and the human rights to water and sanitation of forcibly displaced people?

A:

The IOM business model is projectized in nature: activities are donor funded, with the exception of small seed funds to initiate a response during a large-scale crisis. The budgets for WASH activities depend upon the capacity of each country mission and thus resource mobilization is a key field level responsibility. The missions fundraise according to the overall needs and existing capacities: there is no bias on which sector is prioritized. However, human and financial resources can be a challenge for IOM when the high volume of concurrent and large-scale crises exceeds available resources.

5. Please identify the main challenges your organization faces when providing access to sufficient, safe, physically accessible, and acceptable water and sanitation services to forcibly displaced people, in a non-discriminatory manner, during emergencies. How does your organization coordinate the provision of emergency water and sanitation humanitarian assistance with other actors, including NGOs and governmental authorities? Please provide country-specific examples.

A:

Like other agencies working in these contexts, implementing WASH projects in humanitarian contexts can face numerous challenges. Access to remote locations can be difficult or insecure, and there can be limited availability of the materials needed for the construction of water and sanitation infrastructure. Further, government capacity to maintain and operate WASH systems can be limited, especially in fragile and conflict contexts. While it is common to prioritize higher quantities over quality at the onset of an emergency, IOM nevertheless always strives to provide services uniformly and equitably to the forcibly displaced, having taken into account the different needs and requirements for unrestricted access.

IOM coordinates its WASH interventions through the country established mechanisms for humanitarian response in line with the IASC guidelines and principles. IOM aims to collaborate with other respondents and complement sequencing of actions, especially when government structures can be supported and improved. As an example, in the PoCs in Wau,

Bentiu and Malakal in South Sudan, IOM, in coordination with other WASH agencies, complement respective actions to ensure that a comprehensive package of WASH services is provided to the inhabitants of the camps. In Wau PoC, IOM provides the camp's water while sanitation and hygiene is undertaken by another partner (Oxfam). In Malakal PoC, IOM provides camp's water while its sanitation and hygiene services cover almost 2/3 of the inhabitants. Similarly in Bentiu PoC, where IOM is responsible of almost half of the WASH services, while three WASH agencies (MercyCorps, Concern Worldwide, UNICEF) provide the remaining services.

6. How are the special needs of forcibly displaced people with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and the elderly, children (often unaccompanied or separated), pregnant women, taken into account in the planning and delivery of your organization's emergency response? How do sanitation solutions meet the special needs of girls and women, in terms of physical accessibility, safety, cultural acceptability, privacy/dignity and management of menstrual hygiene? How is water and sanitation needs assessment undertaken? Please provide country specific examples.

A:

IOM consults with beneficiary communities to ensure that the design of its interventions is locally appropriate and takes account of the different needs of the affected populations and fosters unrestricted access for the different population groups. Equally, the location of the WASH facilities is selected after a thorough consultation on universal accessibility and in consideration of risks of gender-based violence (GBV).

In South Sudan, the "Integrated Emergency WASH Response and GBV Prevention" project follows a robust assessment process to ensure that the interventions are the most appropriate to meet beneficiaries needs and that GBV risks are prevented. A knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey along with water and sanitation infrastructure assessments are systematically undertaken in each location of intervention. Further, IOM conducts a series of focus group discussions (FGD), especially with women and girls to understand and plan addressing their needs, including menstrual hygiene management. The project WASH team is gender balanced, at all levels (national and international staff) which facilitates the interaction with the female beneficiaries and creates an environment conducive to decision making that is gender inclusive to address the needs of women and girls.

Also in South Sudan, in Malakal and Bentiu PoCs, IOM has undertaken FGD with persons with special needs (PSN) in order to provide them with an adequate latrine. The design of the latrine changed and improved over time, so as to increase physical support, as well as widen privileged access for the latrines (e.g. first upon entry to the block of latrines is for PSN). At the beginning of the crisis in South Sudan (Dec. 2013), a lack of material against coupled with the magnitude of the crisis and arrival made the construction of the latrines for PSN challenging. Thus IOM worked with the camp manager to allocate the shelters closest to the latrines to the families with PSN members. Latrines tailored for children were also constructed. All latrines are identified according to gender, using icons and color coding (previously discussed and agreed with the beneficiary community). The latrines have lockable doors and are separated by gender, allowing woman and girls privacy and protection. Menstrual hygiene management has been considered widely in South Sudan, with reusable sanitary pads and other menstrual hygiene items (e.g. underwear and soap) distributed to women and girls of menstrual age, along with hygiene education for the correct use of the items is provided. Since 2016, IOM, through its Core Pipeline of WASH supplies project, has provided, directly and through partners, over 30,000 menstrual hygiene management (MHM) kits across South Sudan.

7. Is the affordability of water and sanitation services an issue during emergencies? How does it affected the lives of forcibly displaced people? In the case of cash-based interventions, how is the affordability criteria of water and sanitation services calculated and incorporated therein?

A:

The capacity for forcibly displaced populations to acquire water and sanitation services is limited. Forced displacements usually occur suddenly and there is little time to prepare, with little cash in hand. Moreover, even if financial resources are available, accessing water and sanitation services might be restricted due to the pressure inflicted to the host communities by the new needs of the displaced. Moreover, the new demand can cause fluctuation in market prices that

makes difficult to afford such services for the displaced and even for then host. Water and sanitation infrastructure and resources are typically fitted only for the host communities, and expanding it for population influxes requires additional investments in time and resources. If displacements are across borders, the populations may face additional issues, such as currency and legal status that forbids them to access to water and sanitation services in the same level as the host.

8. In situations of forced displacement across borders, what standard of water and sanitation services do national and local authorities of transit and/or destination countries apply to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in a vulnerable situation while en route, at borders and at reception? What role does your organization play if Government's policies are discriminatory in the provision of water and sanitation services?

A:

Countries receiving refugees, asylum seekers and migrants respond to the water and sanitation needs according to their respective constitutions, alignment and commitment to the universal declaration of human rights and, if signatories, their obligations to the Refugee Convention, as well as in line with the capacities and availability of resources. Some countries do their utmost to assist while others less so. In several cases, water and sanitation services and resources for these populations are restricted, with priority given to the host communities. In such contexts, IOM strongly advocates with local and national authorities to improve the access to those services to ensure that minimum humanitarian needs are met. During implementation, IOM aims to balance the services provided to affected populations relative to what the host communities receive to reduce tensions between the communities.

9. In situations of internal displacement, what is the standard of water and sanitation services governmental authorities apply to internally displaced persons? If they are subject to different treatment from the host communities, what role does your organization play in those situations?

A:

Similar to cross border displacement, IOM advocates with national and local authorities in charge of allocating water and sanitation services, to guarantee that the internally displaced persons receive the minimum humanitarian requirements. IOM follows the *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response* from the Sphere project in order to establish the qualitative and quantitative benchmarks for its WASH interventions. Nevertheless, if the resources and context are favorable to provide above the minimum standards, IOM will strive for balance between what is provided to the internally displaced and what the host communities receive. Also, as with cross border displacements mentioned above, IOM provides water and sanitation services to the host communities to mitigate imbalances that could occur between host and displaced populations, so as to reduce possible tensions.

10. How has the arrival of forcibly displaced people affected the current provision of water and sanitation services to local communities/host communities (as applicable)? How does your organization support the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation by local/host communities?

A:

Displacements can elevate stresses within the host community. In most cases, water and sanitation services that are modified to meet the needs of both the host and the influx of population unavoidably occupy a portion of the allocation that the host communities used to receive. In addition, countries where internal displacement occurs often have widespread poor water and sanitation infrastructure, with low coverage rates, and are facing war, poverty, and economic, political and social distress. In these cases, and as mentioned in the questions above, IOM advocates and / or provides WASH services to both host and displaced.

11. In situations of protracted displacement (within or across borders), how does your organization cooperate with governmental authorities and development actors in planning, designing and delivering sustainable solutions for the human rights to water and sanitation? How does your organization ensure the participation of forcibly displaced people in the processes?

A:

In protracted crisis IOM aims to provide solutions that are durable but also cost efficient and affordable to the humanitarian context. IOM seeks to maximize the resources available by collaborating and complementing government initiatives to improve and / or expand the existing infrastructure for water and sanitation in order to meet the needs of both displaced and host communities. IOM works closely with the local departments of water and sanitation, identifying gaps and areas that require support, involving and empowering them to take the lead for the resolution of the water and sanitation problems of the displaced and host. IOM also supports these departments through trainings and capacity building programmes, introducing and promoting the use of sustainable technologies (e.g. solar powered systems for water supply, biogas latrines, etc.).

IOM involves the beneficiary communities to the highest degree possible in all the implementation phases of WASH projects, from planning, design, construction and operation and maintenance of the WASH infrastructure, to promoting ownership and empowering them to take responsibilities to sustain it over time. Following dedicated capacity-building, IOM aims to gradually hand-over responsibilities for the management and financing of the services provided to beneficiaries. For that, IOM promotes and support the establishment of WASH committees, composed of voluntary members from the beneficiary community, for the management of the services and facilities.

12. What are the main challenges your organization faces when moving towards a more sustainable and development-based approach to water and sanitation services in situations of protracted displacement?

A:

Protracted crises are often not conducive towards implementing WASH sustainable actions. Regardless of the cause of the crisis (man-made or natural), sustainable initiatives require high initial investments and the use of advanced technologies. However, in protracted crises, the risks of damage, sabotage and deterioration due to inattention often deter donors from making such early high investments. In these crises, local departments of water and sanitation are usually fragile, poorly staffed, unequipped and with minimum operating budgets. On top of that, where there are political, religious, or ethnic disputes associated with the displacements, the local authorities and host communities may be reluctant to support the efforts to resolve the water and sanitation problems among displaced populations, opting instead to divert or prioritize resources to improve their own.

13. In the context of rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts after disasters and conflicts (as applicable), how does your organization coordinate efforts with Governments and NGOs to plan and implement sustainable solutions for the human rights to water and sanitation that enable the return of forcibly displaced people?

A:

IOM coordinates with all relevant parties involved in the efforts to create favorable conditions for return and reintegration, including Governments (origin and receiving countries in case of across borders displacements), humanitarian and development agencies, and displaced and host communities. IOM collects and share information that allows to plan comprehensive interventions that are tailored the needs of the communities in the areas of return (e.g. Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) *return intention survey*, and Shelter, WASH and Health projects assessments) and that builds resilience over the long-term, IOM uses the data to advocate with donors for flexible funding to respond proportionally and timely through multi-year interventions. IOM also advocates with the governments to obtain operational space and their local departments of water and sanitation to coordinate interventions in anticipation of the returns and the need for longer-term reintegration support.

14. How has the return of forcibly displaced people affected current water and sanitation provision of local/host communities? What role does your organization play in situations where Governments cannot ensure the human rights to water and sanitation to returnees?

A:

Returns impact water and sanitation services inversely proportional to the degree to which preparedness and investments were made in anticipation to improve infrastructure and management structures. In that line, IOM works in coordination with the local government, aid agencies and donor community to proactively find avenues to fill the gaps in the provision of water and sanitation services that the arrival of returnees will generate. Generally IOM aims to collaborate and complement the government efforts to address the needs of their returnee populations, though, when the government is unable to respond, IOM advocates to donors for support to take a bigger responsibility and cover the gaps, especially when the rights and dignity of the returnees is compromised.