



MULTI-HAZARD SCENARIO PLANNING: ENSURING EFFECTIVE RESPONSE IN COMPLEX DISASTERS AND CRISES

Lebanese Red Cross

© Lebanese Red Cross

Investing in disaster preparedness is worth it - both in terms of human lives saved and economic returns. In this story we learn how the Lebanese Red Cross has been able to respond to several overlapping crises in the midst of a pandemic due to its contingency scenario planning.

Four overlapping crises at the same time

On 4 August 2020, **two explosions hit Beirut city causing multiple casualties** and widespread damage. Up to 300,000 people were affected. The explosions occurred at a time when three overlapping crises already beset Lebanon: stresses due to the Syrian refugee situation; political and social instability and worsening economic conditions, in addition to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. These compound crises stretched the city's overall emergency capacity to its limits. This situation **was beyond anything the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) had ever dealt with before.**

The healthcare system was already over-burdened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the explosions, continued access to essential health services and supplies of medicines was, and remain, critical issues due also to the economic conditions in the country. **The explosion increased the risk of transmission**, as protocols could not be precisely adhered to at all times and facilities providing isolation and care for confirmed COVID-19 cases were affected.

Responding to a situation never seen before



Despite its active base of well-trained and experienced volunteers and staff, LRC was suddenly faced with an unimaginable scenario - **a chemical explosion in the context of a pandemic.** The disaster also directly affected volunteers' families.

The National Society had to respond to the disaster caused by the port explosion and the increase in COVID-19 cases, making an extraordinary effort to cover the most urgent needs of the population.



PREPAREDNESS AREA & COMPONENT RELATED

ANALYSIS & PLANNING



Scenario Planning

KEY STATS *



- Over 250,000 people helped
- 10,800 families received direct cash assistance for a total of USD 22.8 million.
- 43,000 household assessments completed



- 7,000 Volunteers mobilized to respond to the Beirut blast

*Overview after one year assistance.

Keys to success



- LRC was ready to respond and help in any crisis based on their contingency plans and continuous trainings. LRC has a clear contingency plan, Standard Operating procedures, and training packages for public health emergencies since the Ebola outbreak 2014.
- Trust of the institutions and the population in the National Society due to **75 years of service in the country**.
- LRC benefits from a large and active base of **well-trained and experienced volunteers** (12,000) and staff (400), including a specialized Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Unit (CBRN).
- LRC works closely with vulnerable communities on **disaster preparedness programmes**.
- Based on the multi-sector needs assessment results and their preparedness to address them, LRC increased the scope of its activities to provide unconditional cash and voucher assistance (CVA) to 10,000 families over a period of six months after the explosion.
- In its strategy, the LRC includes: Improving access to essential health services; **ensure effective preparedness and response to disasters and crises**; improve community engagement and resilience and ensure continued development of National Society and improve sustainability.
- **LRC is supported by the IFRC, ICRC and 21 Partner National Societies**, who have been working in close coordination to ensure a well-targeted and comprehensive response.



“We know that we have to continue training, preparing ourselves and coordinating with others to complete the work, as only together, we can reduce the risks”.

Georges Kettaneh, Secretary General, Lebanese Red Cross

For more information:

- Lebanon: Chemical Explosion Beirut Port Case Study (2020). [Document](#)
- Lebanese Red Cross: www.redcross.org.lb
- National Society Preparedness: www.ifrc.org/disaster-preparedness

This success story was developed with support from:



+C IFRC