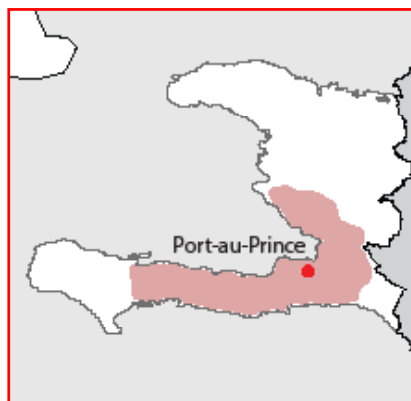# Case 3 Haiti — Beneficiary communication for camp closure programs

Keywords

- Camp closure
- Cash rental support
- Communication with communities
- Durable solutions
- Grievance mechanism
- Information management
- Local adaptation
- Urban area

Port-au-Prince

Displacement Data

Country: Haiti

Cause of displacement: Earthquake

Disaster date: 12 January 2010

Disaster location: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogâne

People displaced: 1,500,000 (at peak)

Lifetime of camps/settlements: January 2010 – Present (2013)

Project Data

Project location: Port-au-Prince

Project duration: October 2010 - Present (2013)

Number of households targeted: 63,000 (until the end of 2013)

CCCM Cluster: Activated

Comic based newspaper conveys message on the camp closure program

Context

Since 2011, the Government of Haiti, with support from the CCCM/Shelter Cluster and partner agencies, has engaged in Cash Grants Rental Subsidy (CGRS) programs, which provide affected households with a cash stipend to cover one year's rent, plus additional grants for livelihood or other types of assistance. From the beginning of the CGRS program in 2011 until the end of 2013, an estimated 63,000 families will have been relocated from camps using this approach. Camp closure was thus based on the respect for the rights of the displaced by ensuring that the decision to leave was informed and voluntary. The process involves considerable efforts dedicated to developing strategies for communication with beneficiaries.

Background

After the earthquake of 2010, a broad area of metropolitan Port-au-Prince was severely affected and a large number of people were displaced to both ad-hoc and planned camps. At the peak of the crisis, 1.5 million IDPs were living in 1,500 self-settled and planned camps. The return and relocation programs for IDPs in camps have been coordinated by the Government of Haiti's Housing and Public Building Construction Unit, with support from the CCCM/ Shelter Cluster. In the years since the earthquake, various CCCM/Shelter Cluster partners have supported the national authorities in the implementation of a variety of different solutions for IDPs in camps. These programs include the distribution of cash grant rental subsidies for displaced people to seek alternative accommodation, repairing houses, and providing transitional shelters. Support has also encompassed longer-term solutions, such as repairing damaged houses and the reconstruction of new houses. Transitional shelter construction provided to urban IDPs and rental subsidy program offered different strategies to support camp closure.

Avoiding forced eviction

The camp and public space in Place Saint Pierre was closed in August 2011. The process of relocation was accomplished when IDPs, local authorities and land owners had been well informed about the camp closure programs through inclusive communication strategies. Also the implementing organizations took into consideration the dignity of the displaced population by establishing a grievance mechanism for the displaced populations.

Two-way communications

Offering interactive dialogue with the camp population is the central idea of two-way communication. Different approaches were adopted to enhance two-way communications with the camp populations prior to major camp closure procedures. The CCCM camp management operations team set up regular meetings with camp residents and camp committees. In addition, beneficiary lists were published on boards available in the camp, as well as on the Mayor's office board, and one staff member was assigned to each family to track their progress throughout the camp closure process.

Small group meetings of 25-35 heads of households were also held to answer questions concerning the relocation process and to receive feedback from the community.

A theatre workshop initiative called "Theatre as Therapy" was established to allow residents to give voice to their often traumatic life experiences in the camp and to express their hopes for a return to a normal life in the community.

Community platforms (space of dialogues) were created with the support of local and municipal authorities and development agencies, to give communities where camp residents were returning to an opportunity to contribute to the process of urban planning in their original neighborhoods.

Grievance and complaint mechanisms

In 2011 and 2012, simple wooden boxes labeled 'suggestion box' were placed in the displacement sites. Over 120 such boxes were installed

Setting information kiosks for two-way communication. July 2010 / IOM Haiti

providing voices to the voiceless and bringing them into the national level conversation. In an overwhelming response, 3,000 letters were posted, expressing residents' needs for housing, jobs, and education opportunities. CCCM agencies used these requests to analyse expectations and the IDPs' needs and to plan camp exit strategies.

In Haiti, beneficiary registration was generally carried out at night to confirm the presence of families, and therefore to avoid false claims. However, there were still some families who had reasonable grounds for their absence at the time of registration time. Thus, for the camp closure programs, grievance mechanisms were employed to hear any claims from such families. Staff were present at the camp on a daily basis to ensure that information was clearly understood and to respond to any questions. The camp committee, return team, UCLBP (the housing construction department of the government), and the Mayor's office of the commune then collaborated in determining the validity of each case.

The CCCM/Shelter Cluster also coordinated with a local online platform, which sorted issues by topics and locations, then uploaded documents onto the website and later published the contents into a booklet titled "Voice of the Voiceless".

*Tap Tap Driver airs information during people's daily commuting.
September 2012 / IOM Haiti*

Mass communications

As the scale of the program grew, communication needs also increased. Partner agencies tried to use diverse types of media to ensure effective mass communication with beneficiaries. Tap Tap is a popular form of public transport which people spend hours in, commuting daily. MP3 radio transmitters with recorded entertaining public messages were provided to the Tap Tap drivers to air in Tap Taps. Episodes of "Radio Tap Tap" were aired on national and local radios, including MINUSTAH FM, the radio station of the United Nations in Haiti.

Bearing in mind the low literacy rates in Haiti, a Creole comic-based newspaper, ChimenLakay, was developed, and at its peak 400,000 copies were distributed. ChimenLakay provided a range of messages on topics such as cholera, gender issues, and hurricane preparedness. Of particular relevance, an edition was published on the topic of camp closure and CGRS. To assess people's comprehension, listeners or readers could telephone a call center free of charge to take part in a quiz and possibly win a prize if they answered all the questions correctly. This activity thus integrated a crowdsourcing mechanism that allowed the CCCM Cluster to ensure that key messages had been delivered.

Lessons

- In Haiti, camp closure programs were implemented **with dedicated efforts in beneficiary communications** that helped avoid unwilling relocation of IDPs from camp sites.

- Camp closure programs **involved local staff (e.g. writers, actors, directors, and producers) as much as possible.** This allowed the development of messages, which effectively target the affected population, by using local knowledge.

- **Local traditions were taken into account for communication strategies.** In Haiti, oral communication was found to be the main way for information sharing, especially when a high percentage of the population is illiterate. It was also essential to pay attention to the way a message is understood and transmitted orally.

- **Involved local authorities as much as possible**. Advocating communications and joint efforts to design, implement and monitor the communication strategy boosted their actions.

- It was found that **holding group meetings involving between 25-35 households** were an effective way for beneficiaries to learn about the program and to have the opportunity to express their concerns. In such processes, well-trained and motivated community mobilizers played an important role between agencies and displaced communities.

- A proactive communication platform **with non-governmental development partners** as well as **with policy-makers in the government** was also needed to ensure the link between relief and long-term development.

European Commission

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

The overall goal of the CCCM Cluster is to improve living conditions of displaced persons. It does this by facilitating the effective provision of protection and services in camps and camp-like settings, advocating for durable solutions and ensuring organized closure and phase-out of camps.