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Sharing Some Key Coordination Challenges Experienced by Humanitarian Practitioners Operating in the Middle East

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Kermanshah earthquake, 2017



Outline

- Needs for coordination
- Discoordination costs
- Coordination practices
- Coordination of logistics efforts: Iran case
- Key practical challenges
- Cash-Based Transfer Program: Case study in Syria



Plasco collapse, 2017

Needs for coordination

- Interdependencies (Theoretical vs Practical)!
 - Resources
 - Data and information on needs
 - Infrastructure and facilities
 - Financial support
 - Technology
 - Know-how and expertise
- Unnecessary duplication of efforts & redundancy
- Accountability
- Improved performance
 - Operational cost
 - Deprivation cost
 - Communication cost
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Sare_Pol- disaster operation 2018

(Thompson, 1967; Balcik et al.,2010)

Discoordination costs

- Aid delays
- High logistical cost (e.g. needs assessment, procurement,)
- Ineffective last mile delivery solutions
- Dissatisfied stakeholders
 - Beneficiaries
 - Donors
 - Local communities

(e.g. Kovács and Spens, 2011)



Coordination practices

- Cluster approach (e.g. Jahre & Jensen, 2010)
- Synchronization of resource flows (i.e. information, money, supplies) (Day et al., 2012)
- Sharing on risk, benefit, information & resources (e.g. Balcik et al., 2010)
- Information system & technology (e.g. Arshinder et al., 2008)

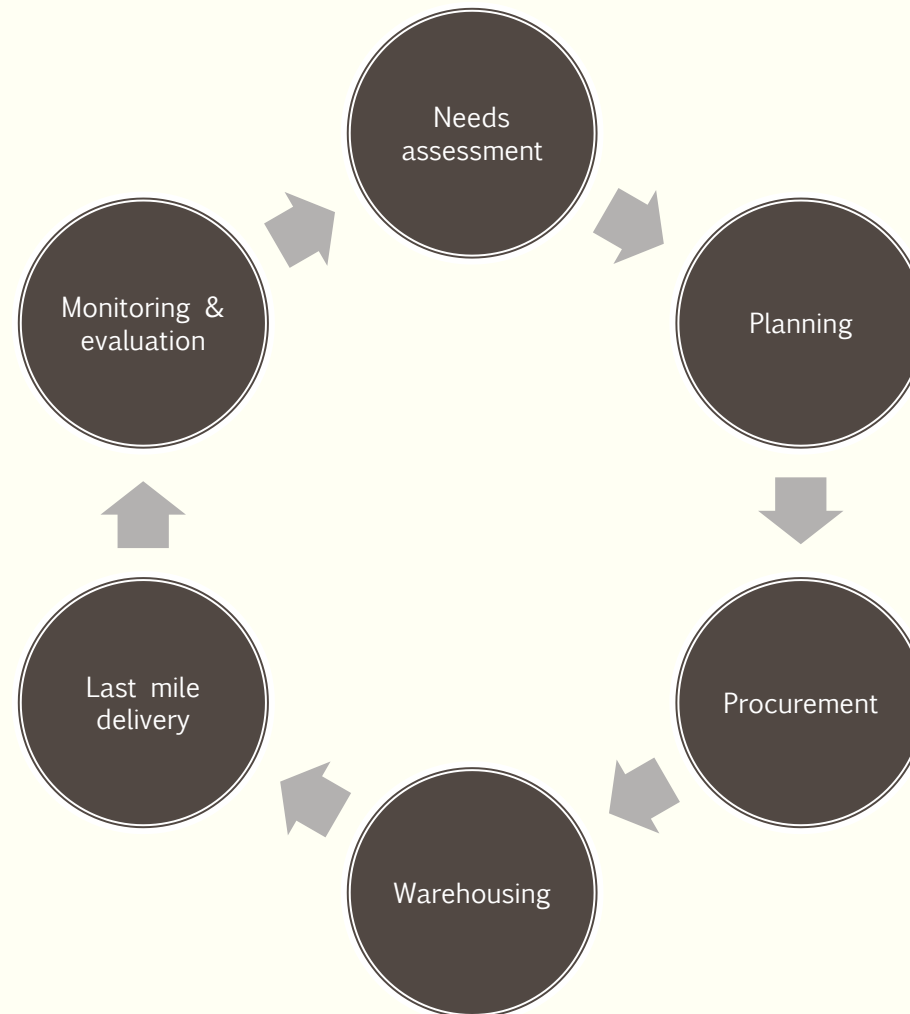
Moderated by:

- Visibility
- Accessibility
- Availability
- Mutual-agreement & trust



The Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) held a coordination meeting discussing dispatch of humanitarian supplies to Iraq

Coordination of logistics efforts in disasters (Thomas, 2003)



Humanitarian organizations' network: Iran case

Government

Public and state authorities

- Ministry of Health – health cluster
- Ministry of road and housing – Logistics cluster
- Ministry of Interior – International relation and coordination (national and state levels)
- Water Organization and Power Ministry – WASH cluster
- Media Ministry – Media and communication cluster
- Municipality – Tehran Disaster Mitigation and Management Organization (state level)
- Military

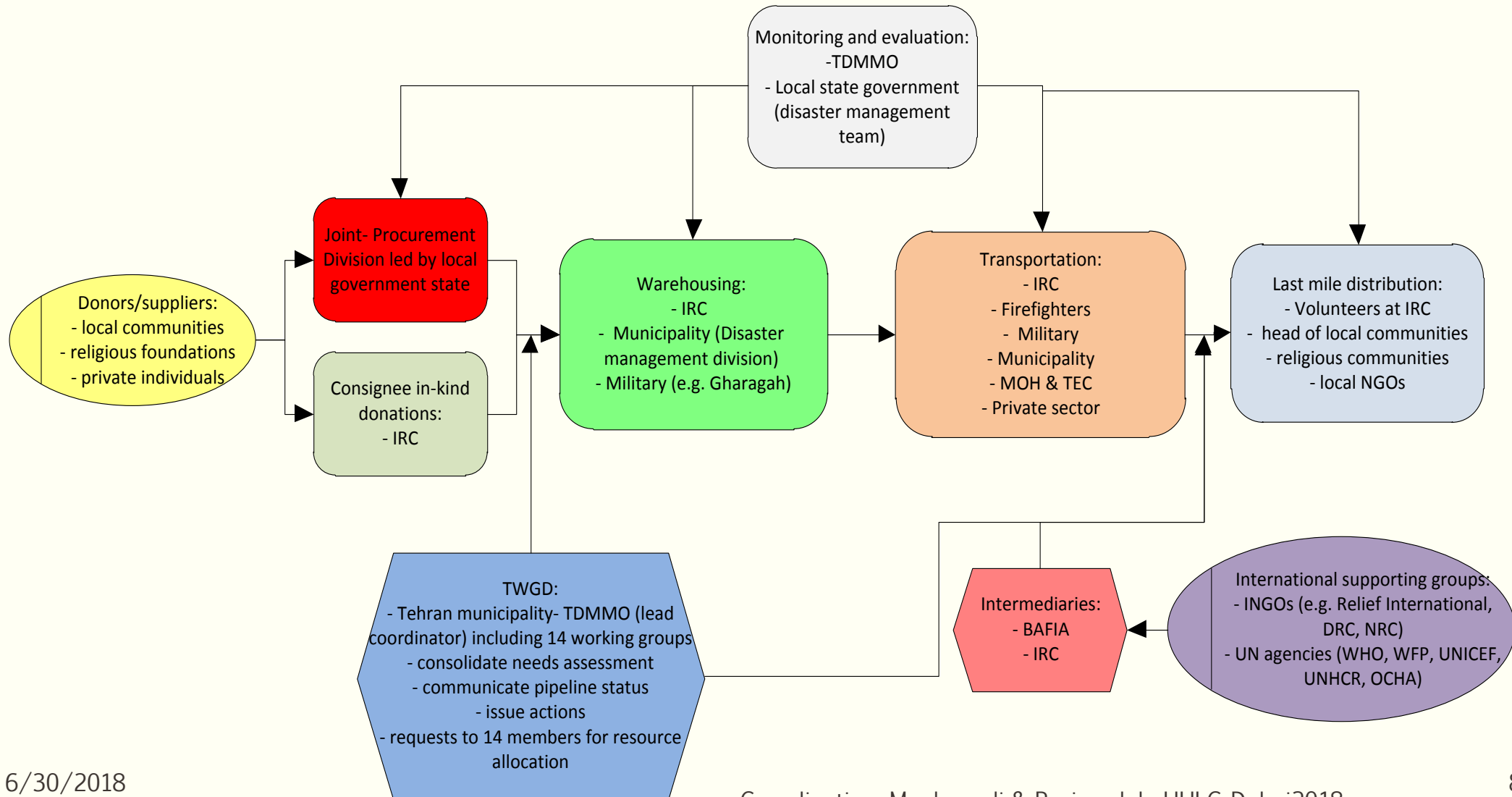
Non-governmental organizations

- Local NGOs
- Red Crescent Societies
- Donors
- Local communities (religious teams, charities,)
- Academicians

International organizations

- UN agencies represented in Iran (WFP, OCHA, UNDP, UNHABITAT,)
- INGOs (Relief International, NRC, DRC, Caritas,

Coordination of logistics efforts: Iran case



Key practical challenges: Joint-Planning

- Lack of experts in coordination of logistics efforts
- Lack of a powerful and skilled lead coordinators
- Lack of fruitful coordination meetings during preparedness
- Lack of interpersonal and inter-organizational trust
- Incompatible organizational structures, culture and mandates
- Conflict of interest
- Religious and emotional aspects



Key practical challenges: Joint-Execution

- Involvement of large number of different organizations
- Direct delivery through donors to the affected people
- Incorrect estimation of needs resulting in oversupply and undersupply of aid (e.g. pile of mineral water, blanket, tent, ...)
- Lack of transition structures for transfer of roles and responsibilities from one phase to the other
- Lack of resource and data visibility
- Lack of acceptance for leadership
- Third bullet point here.
- Lack of integrated and compatible IT system



Kermanshah, 2017

Cash-based transfer (CBT) program in Syria: by Bashar Khoury, WFP Syria

- Over 6 million people displaced inside Syria since 2012 (OCHA report, 2017)
- Over 9 million need food assistance
- Refugees & IDPs; Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, and Europe
- CBT; a livelihood project in Syria
- Supports local markets and economy



Cash-based transfer (CBT) program in Syria: by Bashar Khoury, WFP Syria

Challenges

- Lack of training and capacity building to implement CBT in local areas
- 70% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon do not receive their urgent needs accurately
- Miscalculation of invoices
- Wide range areas to cover with less security
- Large number of distribution points and amount of fragmented data
- Unbalanced and unfair cash distribution (political pressure, religious, race and etc.)
- Difficulties to track cash expenditures (Afghan and Syrian refugees) caused harm to the local economy

Potential solutions

- **Training** beneficiaries on using Voucher & banking card
- Conduct **market research** using reliable data to understand the basic urgent needs
- **Tracking** entire CBT stages from logistics standpoints (e.g. updated status of available goods, retailers, continuous monitoring, etc.)
- Improving **coordination** between the involved HOs conducting CBT program in the region
- Using advance data analytical tools such as **blockchain** technology to carefully monitor and control the program throughout the entire region



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Q & A