Rapid Assessment of 15 schools acting as collective shelters in Jérémie, Haiti

REACH, 2 November 2016

Context

In order to support humanitarian planning, on October 31st, November 1st and 2nd REACH conducted a rapid assessment of 15 schools currently being used as collective centres in the city of Jérémie for populations displaced in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew. The assessment targeted collective centres that are being prioritized for resumption of school activities. The list of assessed schools is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foyer Culturel</th>
<th>St-Luc (école primaire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHO</td>
<td>Collège Emmanuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycée Nord Alexis</td>
<td>Lycée St Luc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marguerite D’Youville</td>
<td>Collège Lumière</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycée de Jeunes Filles</td>
<td>Collège Jean Brière</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Université publique de la Grand’Anse</td>
<td>École professionnelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collège St Martin</td>
<td>Centre Montfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>École Union Patriotique</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 1: Location of assessed schools in Jérémie

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1 This is a small subset of the estimated 85 collective shelters still existing in Jérémie City

2 At the time of writing (2 November), the school "Centre Montfort" had already been evacuated and families have now left the location. They had been able to leave belongings in damaged homes, but it was still unclear where they would spend the night.
Methodology

In each assessed school, qualitative information was collected through group discussions with a cross-section of representatives from each community of origin (mostly neighbourhoods of the city) who were residing in the school. The information gathered is complementary to other ongoing data collection efforts, focusing primarily on the place of origin of displaced populations, their intentions and preferred modalities of aid to support returns.

Overall findings and recommendations

Overall, the REACH assessment points to the following findings:

- In most assessed schools, the vast majority of residents come from surrounding neighbourhoods that were heavily affected by the hurricane
- The main reported reason for being in the collective shelters is because homes are uninhabitable; some people also mentioned that it is easier to access aid from collective centres
- In all sites, populations highlighted that they would like to return to their homes as quickly as possible
- However in order to do so they will require a degree of support, notably for making their homes habitable. In the vast majority of cases requested items correspond to the minimum necessary to cover the roof, be it tarpaulin, CGI and/or wood, or equivalent financial support to afford such materials
- If such aid is not available, people will not be able to return to their homes and will need continued access to other forms of shelter
- Some collective shelter residents reported that they had been renting homes that are now damaged or destroyed. Since the rehabilitation of these homes depends on the home owners, renters will require alternative shelter in the meantime.

Based on the findings above, it is recommended that in the short term:

- Residents of collective centres should be supported with emergency shelter solutions that enable them to return to their homes
- The distribution of plastic sheets could meet the basic needs of a large number of collective centre residents, and could be later complemented by roof rebuilding kits including CGI, wood, roof nails, etc. accompanied by training to ensure safe re-building practices
- Distribution of emergency shelter items should be planned and implemented at neighbourhood (rather than collective centre) level, and should cover needs of non-displaced populations, as well as displaced populations residing in all collective centres (not only priority ones)
- For those who are currently displaced, receipt of emergency shelter support should be conditional to returning to their homes
- Highly vulnerable individuals residing in collective centres who are unable to return home should be identified and provided with other shelter solutions as well as required humanitarian support

Displacement patterns

In most assessed schools, displacement was primarily from surrounding areas. Most shelters host individuals coming from one or two neighbourhoods in Jérémie, with the notable exception of Foyer Culturel and Lycée Nord-Alexis, both of which had received individuals from six different neighbourhoods.

In almost all cases, residents arrived in the assessed school on the day of the hurricane. Exceptions are some populations from La Source and Saint Helene neighbourhoods, as well as 4 out of the 6 communities in Lycée Nord-Alexis (from Makandal, La Pointe, Rue Commerciale and Rue Nord Alexis) who reported reaching the centres 1-3 days before the hurricane.

The main reason for coming and remaining in the school was consistently reported as related to the destruction of homes. In four collective centres, respondents also reported that they were in the school to facilitate access to aid
and basic services. This was the case for communities from Abbé Huet (residing in Foyer Culturel), Gragamora 3 (College Bruyère), Makandal (Ecole Mixte Union Patriotique) and La Source (Ecole Professionnelle).

**Pre-hurricane livelihoods**

All communities in collective shelters reported commerce as their primary source of income before the hurricane, with the exception of those coming from Derrière Château neighbourhood (residing in Lycée Jeune Filles) who reported fishing as their primary income source prior to the hurricane. Secondary sources of revenue were agriculture and fishing, followed by craftsmanship and livestock keeping.

**Coping mechanisms**

In all schools, respondents reported relying on aid from NGOs, churches and neighbourhood solidarity for meeting their basic needs, with a number of respondents also noting that they had not yet received aid.

In four locations (Foyer Culturel, Ecole Mixte Union Patriotique, College Lumière, College Emanuel) communities reported also having some income from Cash-for-Work schemes.

In four schools, communities (from Gragamora 3, Non-Lundi, La Source) also reported that their members are working; women primarily as domestic helpers, men as agricultural labourers or engaged in handicrafts. Two of these communities (Gragamora 3 and Non-Lundi) also mentioned that some of their members have accessed credit to re-establish their trading livelihoods, with one community indicating that credit had been provided by other traders from their neighbourhood.

In one of the assessed locations (Ecole Margerite D’Youville) the resident community from St Helene neighbourhood reported that survival requires ‘seizing’ humanitarian aid, admitting that they did this through violent means.

**Intentions**

When asked about their intentions, all residents mentioned that they want to return to their area of origin as quickly as possible. However, they are currently unable to do so because of the high reported level of damage and lack of appropriate support to rebuild their homes. If support is not provided to return to their homes, all respondents mentioned that they have no other alternative for shelter.

Six interviewed communities recommended that meetings should be held with government and/or NGOs to plan return. Communities from Château and Nan Cité neighbourhoods (residing respectively in Université Grande Anse and Lycée St Luc) had quite a clear idea on how such consultations should take place, recommending a meeting with community leaders, a visit to places of origin and a distribution of aid to those returning to their homes.

**Aid requirements to facilitate returns**

All respondents reported that they would require at least minimal shelter support in order to be able to return to their homes. This varied in line with the reported level of destruction, with the most common requests being for plastic sheeting; CGI, wood and roof nails, or financial support.

Communities from La Source and Derrière Château (residing in College Lumière and Université Publique de Grande Anse) also reported requiring food in order to support their return. Community members from La Pointe indicated requiring treated water and reimbursement for the value of lost assets.

One group also mentioned that they would need support to re-establish their trading and agricultural livelihoods, although this was not mentioned as a pre-condition to return.