



Lebanese Red Cross



# After Action Review – WASH E-voucher Pilot Saida, Lebanon

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FINAL

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## Acronyms

AAR	After Action Review
BA	Basic Assistance
BRC	British Red Cross
CBA	Cash-based Programming
CRM	Complaints and Response Mechanism
DM	Disaster Management
DMU	Disaster Management Unit
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRC	German Red Cross
IT	Information Technology
ITS	Information Tented Settlements
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LRC	Lebanese Red Cross
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PM	Programme Manager
POS	Point of Sale System
PSS	Psycho-Social Services
ToT	Training the Trainers
US	United States
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

## Executive summary

### BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) with the British (BRC) and German Red Cross (GRC), launched an E-voucher project using Red Rose's platform in Saida to provide hygiene items in Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) to 500 Syrian refugee households. As part of the learning process, the LRC commissioned an After-Action Review to document the pilot's learnings and include an action plan to inform how the LRC could scale up the use of E-vouchers in its Disaster Management Unit (DMU) work.

An external consultant conducted the review in April 2018. It included five days fieldwork in Lebanon including 15 key informant interviews (14 Red Cross staff, one vendors); three Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with three LRC volunteers, 19 project beneficiaries (15 women and four men) and five project vendors. There was a one-day workshop with 13 LRC staff and volunteers and one BRC delegate.

### STUDY FINDINGS

The LRC E-voucher pilot project for hygiene was a well-implemented. It showed a high level of intentionality to an iterative process. The teams, at all levels, demonstrated a dedication to trying the new delivery mechanism and to work collaboratively. LRC staff and volunteers universally understood that this was a learning opportunity and that each function had an important role to fulfil along the way.

Most of the necessary cash-based assistance (CBA) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in draft form, all of the functions within LRC seem to have taken ownership to at least get the essential information on paper to help guide the future implementation of E-vouchers. The investment in training including Training the Trainers (ToTs), especially for support and decision makers was a significant step towards strengthening LRC's capacity to respond using CBA.

The procedures used were fit for purpose and context. Moving ahead the focus must be on improving efficiencies and empowering the DM centre volunteers. The devolution of the payment reconciliation process to Beirut programme officers and improving the vendor payment process will be important steps. Serious consideration needs to be given to how best to entice smaller shops to be vendors. Project monitoring needs to be more systematically analysed and better linked to the Red Rose platform.

To bring its E-voucher work to scale, LRC will need to fast-track the uptake changes to systems and procedures. The accountability of the staff to fulfil the commitments that each one identified in the AAR event will be essential to success. In particular, at the DMU level, there needs to be a firm commitment by the sector that project pertains to, in this case the WASH, to assume its role as a "owner" of cash and vouchers as modalities for its own sector.

The project achievements seem positive but are anecdotal. The project participants met basic hygiene needs, were treated fairly by LRC and the vendors, and felt safe in the process. Some shortcomings of the project were communication and sensitisation with the targeted communities, and sub-optimal training. The monitoring was not robust enough and the focus on protection was light.

Red Rose as a third-party technology provider received accolades across the board amongst all study participants. From the set-up to training, to technical support, the company was seen as responsive to LRC's needs and the platform easy to use. LRC also received positive feedback from Red Rose as a well-informed client, who was clear on its requirements.

LRC's experience in this pilot project is not only valuable to them internally. The learning has a lot to offer the broader humanitarian sector in Lebanon, for stakeholders working WASH and CBA, and the Red Cross movement.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Immediate next steps for upcoming programming***

- Keep the functions accountable to promises made and track progress

### ***Programmes***

- Ensure ownership of cash-based assistance in both sectors of the DMU
- Don't lose sight of programme quality and basic standards in CBA
- Align future WASH E-voucher projects to sector standards

### ***Procedures and systems***

- Finalise working drafts of SOPs and keep them live
- Decentralisation of some duties to the DMUs
- Use Red Rose to its fullest for programme and support functions
- Start the organizational shift to digital payments of vendors with the E-voucher project

### ***Lessons learning***

- Document the LRC path toward cash preparedness
- Write and disseminate a project brief aimed at highlighting CBA in a WASH intervention

# 1.0 Background

## 1.1 Purpose of the survey

In 2017, the Lebanese Red Cross's (LRC) in concert with the British (BRC) and German Red Cross (GRC), launched an E-voucher<sup>1</sup> project using Red Rose's platform in Saida to provide hygiene items in Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) to Syrian refugees. The project, in addition to providing humanitarian support to fed into the LRC's cash-based assistance (CBA) preparedness activities that seek to pilot different modalities and delivery mechanisms and institutionalize the processes.

As part of the learning process, the LRC commissioned an After-Action Review (AAR). The AAR was meant to document the pilot's learnings and include an action plan to inform how the LRC could scale up the use of E-vouchers through Red Rose's system in its Disaster Management Unit (DMU) work.

## 1.2 Objectives of the survey

The purpose of the study was:

- To conduct an AAR of the E-voucher pilot undertaken in Saida from January – March 2018, focusing on programme objectives, LRC internal systems, and the use of technology in the project

The study had three objectives:

- To evaluate the project achievements and challenges.
- To review the LRC's internal systems and procedures, and their suitability for E-voucher programming.
- To understand the LRC's experience with Red Rose as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party technology provider.

## 1.3 Methodology and data collection techniques

An external consultant conducted the AAR in April 2018. The study included five days fieldwork in Lebanon including 15 key informant interviews (KII) (14 Red Cross staff, one vendors) (See Annex 1); three Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with three LRC volunteers, 19 project beneficiaries (15 women and four men; in Abra and Shabout) and five project vendors (See Annex 2). There was a one-day workshop with 13 LRC staff and volunteers and one BRC delegate<sup>2</sup>. The workshop followed a standard AAR methodology examining five key questions about the E-voucher pilot:

- What was supposed to happen?
- What was the reality?
- What went well?
- What could have gone better?
- What should be changed for next time?

The consultant also reviewed background documents on the project and other LRC CBA experience. The findings from the interviews and the AAR were triangulated as much as possible across the different tools and means of verification. This report merged the two data sets, calling out any distinct differences and points of convergence.

## 1.4 Background on the project

The E-voucher pilot brought together LRC's Basic Assistance (BA) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) teams in the agency's first E-voucher programme. The project targeted 500 hundred refugee households living in the ITS in Saida, a city approximately 50km south of Beirut. Household size determined the transfer value; it was based on a study of market prices and input on family needs from the WASH team. Participating households received a base payment of United States (US) \$5 and an additional US\$5 for

<sup>1</sup> E-vouchers are defined as "A card or code that is electronically redeemed at a participating distribution point. E-vouchers can represent cash or commodity value and are redeemed using a range of electronic devices." CaLP. (n.d.). "Glossary of Cash Transfer Programming." Web. Accessed 23 April 2018. <http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/glossary#E-Voucher>

<sup>2</sup> There is a separate report covering the process and the outputs of the AAR workshop event.

every individual in the household for a maximum transfer value of US\$55. E-vouchers credit was redeemable through five local shops and for any combination of some 24 hygiene items. The project lasted three months with participants receiving three top-ups.

## 2.0 Study findings

The study had four main questions and 18 sub-questions (See Annex 3), which were explored with the four groups of participants—LRC/BRC/GRC, project vendors, Red Rose, and project participants. The following section examines the perspectives of these groups about these questions.

### 2.1 Meeting hygiene needs of targeted communities

Project participants felt that their basic hygiene needs were covered in the items offered for redemption by the E-voucher. They identified cleaning supplies (e.g., soaps, detergents, cleaners) as the essential ones. LRC adapted the list of items to include diapers, which was appreciated by the participants. LRC attempted to triangulate as much as possible with different stakeholders to establish the list of items—with the targeted communities, *shawishes*<sup>3</sup>, discussions with the LRC WASH team, and through a market assessment.

FGD participants suggested that some items be added to the basket of items. However, most of these items appear to be outside of hygiene needs and more in the along the lines of toiletries such a hair gel, body lotion, baby perfume and air fresheners. There were a few items such as brooms or squeegees (i.e., for cleaning floors), that may be considered as household items, but they do contribute to the cleanliness of a household and potentially could be relevant to the list.

There was little indication that the target communities were better able to meet hygiene needs; there was no baseline established to compare the hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is assumed that because of the restricted nature of the E-vouchers and that they were redeemed, the 500 households had consistent access to hygiene items of their choice.

### 2.2 Equity and protection

LRC did not use a specific protocol to ensure a focus on equity or protection in the project. What was most cited by study participants was that in the shop selection criteria protection was most considered (e.g., ensuring close proximities to the ITS). Some LRC staff identified protection as a potential future area of collaboration with their colleagues in Psycho-Social Services Support team.

From the project participants' perspective, they felt safe on their travels to and from and the shops where they redeemed the E-vouchers. The participants expressed feel comfortable in the shops it was important that the vendors had good attitudes—and they did. They also thought that the use of blanket targeting and family size transfers values was equitable. In one FGD, participants raised the concern about resetting PIN numbers over the phone; they would feel safer to do in person because they could know who they were talking to rather than on the phone. Vendors did not see any concerns related to protection or equity. They claimed to give more attention to those participants with special needs (i.e., assisting the elderly).

### 2.3 LRC staff and volunteers' perception of pilot's objective

In the AAR event with LRC staff and volunteers, participants were asked to identify what they understood the objective of the pilot project to be. The activity yielded interesting results. The dominate answers fell into two categories—improving delivery of services (i.e., efficiency, speed) and expanding options for assistance (i.e., allowing targeted populations more choice; LRC using different modalities and delivery mechanisms). These answers reveal that the greater team almost universally saw the pilot as a learning experience that could open the possibilities of LRC's offer to populations in need in a more dignified way.

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<sup>3</sup> These are local leaders that coordinate activities in the ITS with external actors.

## **2.4 Suitability of internal systems and procedures**

The study took a deep dive into the operational aspects of the pilot project. In the following section, the areas of internal processes and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), shop selection, and reconciliation of payment to vendors are explored.

### **2.4.1 Internal procedures, SOPs, and feedback**

Regarding internal procedures, there was a mix of using existing systems, adapting them, and creating new ones. For programmes, some SOPs existed or were in the draft already based on previous CBA or distributions. Both teams mentioned during the interviews that they were working to finalize key SOPs that are critical E-voucher work. It is not clear if the team used an SOP for monitoring though they did adapt tools used in the past for this project (i.e., Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM), market observation, market monitoring).

For procurement, the SOPs customarily used were suitable. When they needed to deviate from those SOPs, they just wrote a note to file, which was acceptable. There was no SOP in place at LRC for the type tendering process needed for vendor selection; the nature of the process was different as it looked at capacity and was not based on a financial evaluation. As a result, LRC had to learn as it went. The BRC delegate, who had experience in such vendor assessments, backstopped the process using guidelines adapted from peer organizations in Lebanon.

For finance, it was stated that the typical SOPs could not be amended. However, the team did succeed in adapting the procedures for an emergency situation, which helped to speed up the processes (e.g., make payments to vendors faster). At the time of the interviews, the finance director confirmed that she was writing SOPs based on this pilot's experience for future use. Some observed that the finance team needed to do a considerable "mind shift" to adopt procedures (e.g., issuing contracts without dollar amounts), but that the initial investments paid off to a smooth collaboration. What was also helpful is that there was one point of contact in finance who was involved throughout the process.

The feedback mechanisms used normal SOPs. The project participants felt that the hotline was appropriate. They did mention that sometimes the hotline was not answered when they called, though the LRC team stated that all calls received were responded to by the team. Overall, they preferred talking to the LRC volunteers about their concerns. Vendors had no concerns related to the channels of communication with LRC. Within LRC, however, some interviewees raised the issue that there was no systematic review or assessment of the vendors; it was then not clear if they captured doubts related to vendor performance in a timely, orderly manner.

### **2.4.2 Shop selection process**

The programmes staff led the shop selection process. Most of the study respondents acknowledged that this was less than an ideal situation and that ideally the process should be led by procurement. Nevertheless, the procurement team and other colleagues recognised that their team's capacity to go into the field and do such an assessment was not feasible. Therefore, the involvement of procurement and finance from the project set up a viable stop-gap measure to ensure that procedures were set-up properly and that the assessment would be done in a timelier manner.

One Beirut-based LRC volunteer coordinated the actual assessment of the shops in concert with the Saida Disaster Management (DM) ones. Criteria considered in the shop selection process included location (mapped by GPS), the number of average transactions per day, size of shop and warehousing capacity, availability of hygiene items and quality, the frequency of displaced Syrians using the shop, and the willingness of the shop owner to participate in such a project. LRC first assessed the local markets, seeing which fit its criteria. The tender was not advertised as such rather vendors were invited.

One of the points of concern in the process was how best to attract smaller shops to apply as vendors, as this was a priority for LRC. Despite the intention to draw applications from such shops, the team had limited

success; only one selected vendor was considered to be in this category. The major stumbling block in enticing them was that the businesses needed to be a registered with the government for as a business and for tax revenue collection. Many shops of smaller sizes lack such documentation though they could be potentially attractive vendors willing to participate. LRC experienced such stumbling blocks in the project; one shop was initially contracted to be a vendor then subsequently removed because the owner lacked tax registration status.

After the submission of the necessary documentation, the bids were assessed by a team in Beirut including procurement, finance, and programmes. Five vendors were selected. The selected vendors found the process easy and four were already working with the World Food Programme (WFP) with its E-voucher programme. From the signing of the contracts, the vendors started to receive clients for the LRC project within 15 days.

#### **2.4.3 Reconciliation of payments to vendors**

The reconciliation payment process was relatively smooth for the vendors. They were to print off daily receipts, which would later be collected by the DM volunteers. The process took about three weeks to settle. They reported that in one month their payment was delayed, but that was corrected the next.

On the side of LRC, however, the process was somewhat labour intensive. In addition to the Saida volunteers collecting the receipts, the Beirut based BA programme manager then reconciled the receipts with the Red Rose system, passing the approval to the next level in finance. The approval process was tracked in Red Rose by function. After approval, the BA programme manager then physical disbursed checks to the vendors in Saida on a bi-weekly basis. Both programme and finance staff commented that this process was sub-optimal regarding efficiency.

#### **2.5 Red Rose system: experience, use, and capacity**

The project participants were found the Red Rose system acceptable. Their only complaint was that it took some time to ring up the transactions on at the shops as the vendors needed to ring up the purchases twice, once in the Red Rose app and then in the shop's system. The vendors did not have any issues with the Red Rose app and found it easy to understand and use. They also felt that the equipment was good quality, appropriate and sufficient to their client levels. They felt confident in the use of the app and that the training they were given was adequate. Their only concern was the same as the participants on the need to ring up the purchases twice being time-consuming.

Among the LRC staff and volunteers, the feeling was that the Red Rose system delivered as it was supposed to. Their training of LRC received accolades. The LRC staff was extremely pleased with Red Rose's accessible to address requests and their timeliness in doing so; the Skype group was seen as useful. There were no issues related to problems with functionality of the system. As it was updated in real time based on the syncing at the field level, the accuracy of the data was appreciated.

From the Red Rose team's perspective, LRC was well organized before the training and clear on what they wanted from the company. They stated that the training was the "most crowded" they had ever given, a testament to LRC's interest to make it as inclusive as possible. Lastly, Red Rose noted that LRC had an excellent capacity to use their platform and requested specific types of dashboards. LRC's savviness with Red Rose was undoubtedly aided by the fact the BRC delegate embedded in LRC was intimately aware of its functionalities—a tremendous plus for the team.

#### **2.6 Use of Red rose system and its features**

Most of the elements in the platform were used at least nominally including tabs on beneficiaries, vendors, and commodities. Outside of BA, most of the LRC staff admitted to limited use of the platform. In particular, WASH did not seem to use it much even though the project is within its sector focus. Also, in accessing the platform, there was a gap in the "amount redeemed" and "amount paid to vendors," potentially arising from

approvals pending in the system<sup>4</sup>.

While the platform was used, it perhaps was not used optimally. The monitoring data from PDMs and FGD was not integrated into the platform as was hoped and possible. Volunteers did not have access to the platform, which limited their understanding of it and what it had to offer. They expressed an interest in having access to be able to reconcile PIN problems in the field rather than relying on Beirut based colleagues. The platform itself is a powerful tool to analyse, course correct, make decisions, monitor and report. Some study participants admitted that more intentional use of Red Rose would be useful.

LRC began to use the attendance feature for the participants that were present at hygiene sessions. The intention was to cross-reference this with the spending habits post-awareness sessions, but to date, this has not been completed. LRC also began to use the GIS feature to map distances travelled to shops and preferences. Red Rose commented that this is only the second time that the function has been used and has the potential for expansion.

Another feature that was not well integrated with other LRC systems was the feedback mechanism. LRC has a separate system that is managed through an Access database; the system is for LRC DMU overall. There was no integration of the systems during the pilot, but they were used in parallel. An attractive feature in the Red Rose platform is that it can store and send SMS messages for the participants, but this feature was not used. Red Rose can also integrate the use of biometrics; this could be an option moving forward to counter the issue of PIN loss and would be more secure. Nevertheless, stricter data management will need to be in place as well as purchasing equipment, training and creating SOPs.

## **2.7 What worked well in the project**

The participants appreciated the project approach. They were all familiar with the concept of E-vouchers, and the vendors knew already. As one FGD participant said, “everyone needs hygiene stuff,” therefore it was relevant to their needs. They also liked the use of a blanket targeting. In the case of criteria based targeting they felt that households can be “left out.” Furthermore, they liked that the amount received was adjusted for household size and not a fixed amount. Project participant was happy that they could choose what they wanted. In LRC monitoring, the team found that some participants claimed to be able to save money that they would have used on hygiene products and put it to other uses. In one of their FGD, a participant said that she was going to take her child out of school because she could not afford the cost of transport. With the E-voucher project, she was able to keep him in school as other expenses was taken care of with LRC’s support. For the vendors, they were pleased to be part of the project. Four out of five of the vendors had made a considerable profit. The vendor that did not still insisted that he was happy to support the population in need where he could.

LRC interviewees praised the flexibility of their colleagues in the setting up and running the pilot. All functions showed a high sense of ownership in the process and willingness to learn from the experience. This was an evident sense that LRC worked as a team across different functions to plan and implement the project. They commented that the processes used were transparent. Across all LRC functions, staff and volunteers affirmed that the Red Rose system made their work more efficient, through the consolidation of data in a central platform in an organized way. As a result, data management was less labour intensive as compared to managing Excel sheets. For the Complaints and Response Mechanism (CRM), Red Rose helped them to give real-time feedback to callers on the hotline as the staff could access information quickly (e.g., expenditures on cards).

Interviewees also commented that by via E-vouchers LRC used fewer resources (e.g., warehousing, transport, volunteers for distributions) and was not inhibited by weather factors (e.g., rain, sun). Also, by using shops as suppliers, the quality of the products was better, as at times vendors used in direct distributions may not bring the specified items according to the LRC WASH staff.

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<sup>4</sup> LRC Red Rose main dash board. Accessed 25 April 2018.

This pilot project was viewed a “programmatically opportunity” for LRC to expand its portfolio of modalities and delivery mechanisms, as well as sectors where CBA could be implemented. LRC increased its ambition for emergency response using CBA from 72 hours to 48 because of their new capacities. They also remarked at how the project helped to foster integration of programmatic areas within the organization. LRC was also satisfied that the intervention supported the local markets and business people. They also feel that it reached its objective of making hygiene products more accessible to populations in need and that the communities seemed satisfied.

A review of the background documents reveals that the teams were methodological in documentation the process of the pilot. The consultant received some well-organized internal documents that explained the processes and steps taken throughout the pilot project’s cycle. When reviewing these documents, it was easy to see the evolution of CBA within LRC and the reasoning for the paths taken, as well as the implementation of previous recommendations (e.g., documenting lessons learnt, better quality documentation, decision logs). What is striking in this was that the uptake of deliberate, methodological focus on doing CBA has apparently permeated the way of working in LRC. Furthermore, LRC, with BRC put into place training and capacity building to support their work during this pilot project that will have long-term impacts on the organization if they are kept alive and updated. By empowering Training-of-Trainers (ToT), LRC created powerful resources for themselves and the broader CBA community in Lebanon and other Red Cross National Societies.

Another success of the project was the newness of the approach in Lebanon. Undoubtedly, the novelty of such an approach in the organization and the way for working that it engendered was a significant achievement. The project was seen as inclusive with considerable involvement of support staff in finance and procurement essential to the success of the project, bringing together of two of LRC’s sectors in implementation. The Red Rose provided a literal platform for LRC to come together to see and manage data for different functions in the same organization.

While LRC has worked in CBA since 2014, it was its first time to use a closed-loop<sup>5</sup> E-voucher. Beyond LRC, the use of closed-looped E-vouchers in Lebanon has had limited use. Both the LRC staff and volunteers and vendors were familiar with systems used by WFP, but they could only identify two other closed-loop E-voucher experiences in the country.<sup>6</sup> While the Point of Service (POS) machines using Automated Teller Machines (ATM) cards are understood to be accessible to most people in Lebanon, there are “black holes” where such delivery mechanisms are not possible to use. In the case that the banking system would be non-functional or that there would be needs with a population who do not have reliable access to ATMs, using a closed-loop E-voucher gives LRC an advantage over other organizations.

Lastly, the use of CBA for hygiene items or in the WASH sector, in general, seems to be a new approach in Lebanon—in LRC or beyond. Project participants were familiar with the use of E-vouchers but expressed that this was new receive them for hygiene products.

## **2.8 What could have worked better in the project**

Overall, there were no significant concerns related to the project implementation. Each of the stakeholder interviewed had some observations that would help to strengthen the impact of the project and make the process more efficient.

The project participants highlighted a few concerns. The hygiene sessions, only implemented in a few areas, even though adapted during the short project were not very well received by the participants. They did not feel that they had learned anything new; even the LRC staff expressed reservations on the utility of the sessions. They also expressed the concern about the transfer size for smaller or larger households (i.e., for two-three people or more than nine). For the smaller households, they felt that the minimum may not be

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<sup>5</sup> A closed loop system is “A system in which the institution that issues the payment card is always the same institution that provides the acquiring infrastructure. The card or password can only be used on the acquiring infrastructure of that one institution.” CaLP (n.d.). “Glossary.” Web. Accessed 24 April 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Nick Nichols. Personal Interview, Beirut. 16 April 2018.

enough to meet basic needs. For the larger, ones, the concern was that the transfer amounts only were adjusted up ten family members. Perhaps most significant point raised in one FGD was about communication. The participants suggested that they would like LRC to use other means to communicate with them rather than through the *shawish*; they implied that not all information was reaching them or that it could be manipulated. An observation stemming from comments during the FGD suggested that messaging with the project participants may need to be tweaked. The requests to change offered products for ones that can be perceived as toiletries showed a gap in understanding of what a hygiene product is and what one is not. To ensure further the participants' satisfaction with project LRC may look to change and strengthen messages.

Communication came up as an area needing improvement, mainly at the field level. The DM volunteers stated that, although there was a plan in place, they could find themselves needing to shift duties or take on activities with little warning. Communicating more explicitly on the dates of the top-ups to the DMs and the vendors could help lessen the burden of requests by project participants both stakeholders. This, in turn, may reduce the requests to check balances at the shops, which can make the shops more congested for customers.

While blanket targeting was widely seen as appropriate, the ITS were spread out across a vast circumference of Saida. This caused issues for the DM volunteers. For instance, to do monitoring of more than one site in a day. Condensing the targeting of the ITS targeted is likely to be more efficient, though always considering need first. Volunteers also felt that the management of PIN numbers was sub-optimal, as they needed to go through Beirut to solve the problems.

The monitoring of impact and process was not a strong component of the project; in the words of one respondent they "let it slide." Although PDMs were completed twice during the project and FGD once, there was no standard format or SOP used. Furthermore, the routine and systematic use of data to inform the project was limited, mainly to the Beirut based staff. The feedback on vendors will be an important area to systematize moving forward. With more than one DM centre, it will be challenging to ensure that the volunteers or staff can informally collect information on the vendors' performance. LRC respondents felt in some way "they got lucky" with these vendors, as they seemed to treat the project participants with respect and there were almost no reports of price changes. The team is aware that relying on the continuation of luck moving forward is dangerous; fortunately, the procurement team has volunteered to lead on such a process of formal feedback.

The timing of some activities was done with short notice or with little leeways such as developing the vendor forms and recruiting for vendors. Procurement felt that they should have been involved in critical steps (e.g., procurement in the collection of the vendor application) and that some delays were created as a result (e.g., missing documents in vendor bids).

The reconciliation process was sufficient but inefficient. The BA programme manager invested a considerable amount of time reconciling payments. The least efficient aspect of the process was, however, the actual payment. The personalized service of hand-delivering checks to the vendors no doubt was welcome by them, but not the best use of the PM's time.

LRC could also consider coordinating with other agencies working in the same area on the timing of transfers to not coincide, namely WFP. This idea could reduce the level of traffic in the shops, so there is not a rush to redeem E-vouchers. However, this should be cross-checked with the participants as some may want to do all of their shopping at once for convenience and to save money on transportation.

## **2.9 Changes needed to bring the system to scale**

The imminent intention to use of Red Rose system and E-vouchers in new projects puts urgency behind the necessity to act. Fortunately, the pilot has been a participatory learning process for most of the LRC team, and most are aware of the changes that need to be made.

With the assumption that the Beirut based team will not expand in number, the focus must be on efficiency in systems and approaches especially between Beirut and the DM Centres. Some urgent points are:

- Finalisation or agreeing on working drafts of SOPs
- Reactivating the ToTs to review the training materials based on the findings of this AAR
- Training staff (in BA and WASH) and volunteers on SOPs, CBA and the Red Rose system especially in the newly DM centres
- Setting up training plans based on existing SOPs and training curricula
- Streamlining the reconciliation process
- Revising user rules for the Red Rose platform especially if more Red Cross partners will be involved
- Mainstreaming CBA as a modality in WASH

While not critical, there are some issues that LRC is wrestling with that should be addressed. One is related to using smaller shops that may be unregistered for taxes at the time of bidding. Legally, LRC must work with shops that have business registration. In other parts of Lebanon, however, there may be a scarcity of shops with tax registered or the shops frequented by the target population may not be registered for this. Smaller shops who already have business registration may be motivated to apply for tax registration once they are aware of the potential lucrative revenue from being a part of such a project. LRC needs to discuss the best way forward of dealing with such a scenario, which may have budgetary implications and impact the assessment on Value for Money.

With the growth of the E-vouchers, work optimization of payments will be critical. This is important to allow for programme staff to focus the quality of programmes and also for separation of duty; it is not good practice for programme staff to be involved in the disbursement of payments, which is a finance function. The finance department mentioned that there are plans to use bank transfers instead of checks, which will be a vastly more efficient means to close the reconciliation phase. It will save time for the programme staff and assure funds reach the vendors with a clear electronic paper trail. In the absence of bank transfers, the programme teams will need to find ways to increase the efficiency of the reconciliation process. They have already identified moving to monthly payments as one solution.

Another aspect to consider is the transfer value. Both the project participants and LRC staff and volunteers recognized that there is a need to have a minimum amount that small families can still take advantage of. Also, LRC is considering how to budget for changes in family sizes especially for those that may have babies during the project.

#### **2.10 Self-identified priority actions for future CBA in LRC**

In the AAR event, participants identified actions that they saw as priority for their functions/departments to improve future CBA projects in LRC. These activities were divided into two categories:

- Three critical actions that need to happen before June
- Three longer-term actions that should happen, but not an immediate priority

Some of the identified activities are in process but needs to be finalized. The group noted that all of the events of the DM centre (volunteers) are intrinsically tied to the BA or WASH teams. Therefore, the timing and sequencing of the activities are critical to assure that things go as smoothly as planned. Also, support functions such as finance and procurement specifically outlined the need to work in collaboration with programmes in some of the activities. The team showed ambition to further integrate the use of Red Rose into overall systems such as the feedback mechanism and potentially using biometrics.

**Table 1: Priority actions by function for future CBA**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Longer term</b>
<b>BASIC ASSISTANCE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WASH leading on implementation on the process and implementing in Baalbek.</li> <li>Need to put roles and responsibilities and differentiate between operational (WASH) and technical (BA).</li> <li>Develop input, output, and coordination mechanism needs to be replicated on a DM centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vendor visibility (e.g., LRC logo on in vendors' markets, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review cash transfer value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the hotline capacity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community communication (e.g. keeping community involved, communicate the process)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the potential use of biometrics for registering and verifying participants</li> </ul>
<b>DM VOLUNTEERS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct market assessment 1.5 months before loading E-vouchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow PIN resolution rights for volunteers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logistics for distribution to be set up 24 hours in advance of distributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges in project communicated weekly to HQ</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved plan of action for the assessments, verifications, etc., and reduce last minute changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers responsible for receipt collection form vendors</li> </ul>
<b>IT &amp; CRM</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement data privacy and who can see what on Red Rose and roles and responsibilities for users for the current programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider biometrics for registration and verification of participants</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include hotline and PSS integration to capture informal complaints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate Red Rose and the hotline</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hotline categorize for the E-vouchers and SOPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresher on IT for DM centres (training, or refreshers)</li> <li>Roles and responsibility for users' roles for emergencies updated/revisited</li> </ul>
<b>FINANCE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vendor selection to be finished before June (i.e. should have all the data before June) to open bank accounts, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about electronic payments for vendors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payments to vendors will be monthly</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write SOPs for E-vouchers for DMU</li> </ul>	
<b>PROCUREMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve application form for the vendors and selection process with support from DM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and implement vendor evaluation (i.e. fulfilment of terms and conditions, participant satisfaction, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set roles and responsibility for the application process and market assessment (e.g., document collection, etc.) with support from DM</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finish vendor contracts at least two weeks in advance before the loading E-vouchers</li> </ul>	

### 3.0 Conclusions

Based on findings of this study, the LRC E-voucher pilot project for hygiene was a well-implemented. It showed a high level of intentionality to an iterative process. The teams, at all levels, demonstrated a dedication to trying the new delivery mechanism and to work collaboratively. Throughout the study the most frequently used term the LRC staff and volunteers used describe their colleagues was flexibility. LRC staff and volunteers universally understood that this was a learning opportunity and that each function had an important role to fulfil along the way. That is an achievement unto itself because the culture within LRC fosters such values and it is not likely changed. Indeed, when comparing to the 2015 AAR<sup>7</sup>, it was clear that many of these values—commitment, a partnership with LRC and BRC, openness to trying new systems—were present then, as well.

Conversely, looking at the challenges identified in the 2015 AAR, many of which were related to procedures, have since been addressed<sup>8</sup>. The report recommended that LRC systematise and institutionalise learning; this has been achieved with a robust set of internal documents mapping the processes. It suggested that LRC write comprehensive SOPs for CBA and this is underway. While some of the SOPs are in draft form, all of the functions within LRC seem to have taken ownership to at least get the essential information on paper to help guide the future implementation of E-vouchers. The investment in training including ToTs, especially for support and decision makers was a significant step towards strengthening LRC's capacity to respond using CBA.

In general, the procedures used were fit for purpose and context. Moving ahead the focus must be on improving efficiencies and empowering the DM centre volunteers to do as much work as possible at their level; some procedures may need to change such as PIN resolution issues. The devolution of the payment reconciliation process to Beirut programme officers and improving the vendor payment process will be significant steps to allowing the PMs to focus on more strategic issues. Serious consideration needs to be given to how best to entice smaller shops to be vendors and how to tackle the issue of those who do not have registration for taxes. Project monitoring needs to be more systematically analysed and better linked to the Red Rose platform. LRC has a powerful tool within the platform; now that they know how to use it they need to use it better such as linking it to the feedback mechanism.

To bring its E-voucher work to scale, and on its ambitious timeframe of only a few months, LRC will need to fast-track the uptake of the issues already highlighted in section 2.9. The accountability of the staff to fulfil the commitments that each one identified in the AAR event will be essential to success. Therefore, it is imperative that senior management is informed, aware and able to follow up on these commitments over the coming months. In particular, at the DMU level, there needs to be a firm commitment by the sectors, in this case the WASH team, to assume its role as a "owner" of cash and vouchers as modalities for its sector. In line with the short time frame, LRC will need to invest significant time to make realistic action and activity plans that cascade from the Beirut to DM centre levels. Also notable is that the BRC delegate will be completing his mission in the coming months and LRC will be losing a member of its team. Therefore, the handover of any duties previously covered by the Delegate must be done promptly.

Regarding the achievements at the project level, the findings are anecdotal but positive. The project participants were able to meet basic needs, they were treated fairly by LRC and the vendors, and they felt safe in the process. The targeting method, modality, and delivery mechanism were appropriate for the population and the context. The vendors were able to fulfil the needs of the participants and felt that the systems and support from LRC were sufficient. The project was fortunate not to have any significant challenges based on the responses from participants and vendors. There were, however, some shortcomings that lessened the potential strength of this pilot project including communication and sensitization with the targeted communities, and sub-optimal training. The monitoring was not robust enough

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<sup>7</sup> Paula Gil Baizan. (2015). "After Action Review Lebanese Red Cross and British Red Cross Cash Transfer Program Pilot." British Red Cross, London.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

to definitively say if needs were met, as there was no baseline. Though no protection concerns surfaced, LRC seemed to take a “light touch” approach to ensuring that risks related to protection were identified and prevented.

Red Rose as a third-party technology provider received accolades across the board amongst all study participants. From the set-up to training, to technical support, the company was seen as responsive to LRC’s needs and the platform easy to use. LRC also received positive feedback from Red Rose as a well-informed client, who was clear on its requirements.

The AAR strongly shows that LRC is committed to better stewardship; the teams stated that the E-vouchers pilot has helped them reduce the use of resources while engendering more dignity for the project participants through freedom of choice.

LRC’s experience in this pilot project is not only valuable to them internally. Instead, the learning from it has a lot to offer the broader humanitarian sector in Lebanon, for stakeholders working WASH and CBA, and the Red Cross movement. It is a useful example of a national society building its capacity in partnership with other Movement partners to develop a cash preparedness.

## 4.0 Recommendations

Most of the LRC staff have a clear vision of individual duties that they need or want to implement shortly to improve the overall process of CBA (See section 2.10). In addition to those points, LRC should consider the following recommendations to strengthen its E-voucher scale-up and offer an opportunity for others to learn from its experiences.

### ***Immediate next steps for upcoming programming***

**Keep the functions accountable to promises made and track progress:** The participants of the AAR event each identified specific achievable actions that the larger group agreed were critical to the future success and improvement of E-voucher programming. As the timing is extremely short, these actions need to rise to the surface of the teams' duties and the senior management needs to be aware of the needs and timeframes. The teams that will work on the new project should consider to have weekly meetings to track progress up to the implementation date and for a few weeks after the project goes live.

### ***Programmes***

**Ensure ownership of CBA all sectors of the DMU:** The intention to have CBA permeate the work of LRC's DMU is obvious. The practical achievement of this intention still needs to be fostered. BA will take a backseat to future CBA outside its sector, and rightly so. Nevertheless, BA has the experience, the skills and the savviness that other sectors—WASH, Psycho Social Support and Contingency Planning—do not yet possess. While the overall DMU ownership of CBA is important, at a practical level there is urgency in the coming months that the roles, responsibilities and accountability of the BA and WASH teams in the new project be followed up. In the medium term, LRC will need to map out how CBA skills will be ensured in its other sectors. As the DMU strategy is being updated currently, there is an important opportunity to make sure that the architecture behind this institutionalization of CBA in the DMU takes place.

**Don't lose sight of programme quality and basic standards in CBA:** LRC was methodological about focusing on process in the E-voucher pilot, perhaps at the expense of a focus on the technical and programme quality side of the project. While no major quality issues were found in this study or the monitoring, a high performing team such as the one in LRC would be expected to pay keen attention to details that influence quality. In the 2015 AAR, similar points were raised<sup>9</sup>. Before scaling up the E-vouchers, LRC should conduct a brief technical review on targeting (ITS and participants), power dynamics, communication channels, protection and equity. Monitoring and the use of data should be more intentional and used to make decisions and course correct. For example, working through *shawishes* is still critical to working in the ITS, but they should look at other ways to disseminate information such as publicly posted documents, through other community groups or from relief committees. The CaLP Tool box<sup>10</sup> offers a concise grouping of common standards and actions for quality CBA; it helps define what needs to happen for quality CBA. Each of the actions is supported by a set of guidelines and tools and templates on how to achieve quality CBA.

**Align future WASH E-voucher projects to sector standards:** LRC should be more intentional in infusing standards to meet the hygiene objective of such a project. For future E-voucher projects focusing on hygiene promotion, LRC should consider the minimum standards when designing it. The three key factors that should be evidenced in the programming are 1) a mutual sharing of information and knowledge, 2) the mobilisation of affected communities and the provision of essential materials and facilities<sup>11</sup>. While LRC needs to consider

9 Paula Gil Baizan. (2015). "After Action Review Lebanese Red Cross and British Red Cross Cash Transfer Program Pilot." British Red Cross, London.

10 The tool box is accessible at <http://pqtoolbox.cashlearning.org/>

11 SPHERE. (n.d.) "Minimum standards in water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion: hygiene promotion." Web. Accessed 26 April 2018. <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/hygiene-promotion/>

the utility of the sensitisation sessions moving forward, it is argued that a combination of complementary activities will be required in conjunction with CBA and market-based approaches to achieve WASH outcomes<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, careful thought needs to be given to what topics will be most useful and how best to link them to the items being offered through the E-voucher scheme.

### ***Procedures and systems***

**Finalise working drafts of SOPs and keep them live:** LRC is well on its way to having most of the necessary SOPs for its E-voucher work relevant to each function in the implementation process. Once the SOPs at least in a working draft form, and disseminated, LRC should not treat them as not static documents; they need to be understood as live ones so that they remain relevant to different contexts. Changes made to subsequent versions should be auditable for any changes made to them. The Saida DM centre volunteers may be able to backstop the Beirut team to help mentor future DM centres on the SOPs.

**Decentralisation of some duties to the DMUs:** With the scaling up of LRC's E-voucher work it will no longer be feasible nor efficient for the Beirut based teams to continue to follow up some duties that can be taken on by the DM centres. The resolution of PIN issues and collection of receipts is a start, but the teams should look at how best to help the DM centre volunteers to take on more responsibilities. Allowing access to the Red Rose platform could help the team to have a better and more up to date connection the monitoring; this requires their induction to the platform and training, as well.

**Use Red Rose to its fullest for programme and support functions:** The LRC team appears to be pleased with the system and Red Rose confirms that LRC has shown an adroit capacity to use it. The advantage of the system is that it is comprehensive—for use of payments, monitoring and linking to financial records—all in one location. By better utilising the system for monitoring and feedback, as well as the GIS mapping LRC will be able to oversee its CBA work in a wide-ranging way; this could even help to better inform work using other modalities.

**Start the organizational shift to digital payments of vendors with the E-voucher project:** With an eye on efficiency, this change is a must for LRC. The digitisation of supply chain payments can bring benefits to LRC in general by reducing administration costs, the risk of fraud and theft and improve productivity. It also sets a tone for the organization that it embraces e-payments wholly, down to its financial and procurement procedures.

### ***Lessons learning***

**Document the LRC path toward cash preparedness:** With some 190 National Societies throughout the world and the uptake of CBA growing throughout the humanitarian sphere, there is surely a hunger to understand how iterative cash preparedness can be done by and with National Societies. It also highlights the case of technical support between different societies. This could be an important input to National societies that may be looking how to support positively and inclusively. Such a document should include a timeline of events, key actions taken, challenges and how they were addressed.

**Write and disseminate a project brief aimed to highlight CBA in a WASH intervention:** While CBA being seen more positively as a modality in the WASH sector, there is still an evidence gap in the sector. According to the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), WASH is one of the sectors that has tended to favour the use of conditions and restrictions over unconditional and unrestricted cash transfers<sup>13</sup>. The LRC intervention, being unconditional, has something to add to this CBA community. The limited available evidence does suggest that cash and vouchers can support effective access to hygiene items in “out of camp

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12 CaLP. (2018). “The State of the World’s Cash Report Cash Transfer Programming in Humanitarian Aid.” CaLP, Oxford.

13 CaLP. (2018). “The State of the World’s Cash Report Cash Transfer Programming in Humanitarian Aid.” CaLP, Oxford.

settings,” with wider advantages in the community, market, and the agencies implementing the interventions<sup>14</sup>. LRC’s experience does support this hypothesis and should be shared with others. The brief should include the project objectives, process, impact and challenges faced. LRC should ensure that it is posted on the CaLP website and circulated in the CaLP d-group, which are top “go to” areas for those looking for CBA experiences. It should also be shared with the global WASH cluster and relevant WASH coordination structures in Lebanon. Lastly, the brief should be well circulated in the Red Cross Movement.

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14 UNHCR. (2016). “Cash Based Interventions for WASH Programmes in Refugee Settings.” UNHCR, Geneva.

## Annex 1: Key informants interviewed

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
Jamile Mikhael	Procurement Manager	LRC
Mohamed El Haj	Deputy Procurement Manager	LRC
Carine Taja	Finance Manager	LRC
Wajih Freij	Q & A Officer	LRC
Jad Houeiss	WASH Officer	LRC
Lama Al Chamaa	Basic Assistance Project Manager	LRC
Mayssa Ibrahim	Basic Assistance Officer	LRC
Isabelle Falzone	Delegate	GRC
Nick Nichols	BRC Cash Delegate	BRC
Hakan Buyukbayrak	Director	Red Rose
Julia Guner	Technician	Red Rose
Firas Tarabay	IT Officer	LRC
Marwa Antar	Saida Team leader	LRC
Reem Masri	Volunteer Saida	LRC
Mirna Rawass	Volunteer Saida	LRC

## Annex 2: Focus group discussions/Key informant interviews participants

STAKEHOLDER	NUMBER	PARTICIPANTS MEN	PARTICIPANTS WOMEN
Beneficiaries	19	4	15
Red Cross volunteers FGD	4	0	4
Red Cross Staff	11	5	6
Red Rose staff	2	1	1
Vendors	5	4	1
Vendors KII	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Percentage of total</b>		<b>37%</b>	<b>63%</b>

## Annex 3: Study questions

QUESTION	SUB QUESTIONS	PARTICIPANT	SOURCE OF VERIFICATION
<b>Achievements and challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were the defined needs met?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Beneficiaries (women, men, different family sizes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were said needs well assessed in the first place?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were beneficiaries better able to meet their hygiene needs with the voucher than with a hygiene kit?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What from their perspective worked well and what didn't work so well?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Beneficiaries (women, men, different family sizes)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were equity and protection sufficiently taken into account?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Beneficiaries (women, men, different family sizes)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
<b>Suitability of internal systems and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the internal procedures and SOPs being used by the LRC?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Beneficiaries (women, men, different family sizes)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How was the shop selection made and experiences? (Internally and external)</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the reconciliation and payment of vendors work as a process? Would that process work at scale?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Rose staff</li> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>

<b>Red Rose system: experience, use, capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How happy were beneficiaries, vendors, and LRC with the system? Where their differences between groups (e.g., ages, sexes)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Beneficiaries (women, men, different family sizes)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the system being used fully? What features weren't used? Did some groups have particular challenges with some features? What is the reason?</li> <li>What should we be looking to use? Pilot limited use?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Rose staff</li> <li>Beneficiaries (women, men, different family sizes)</li> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did LRC have the right equipment and capacity to be able to make best use of the system?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Rose staff</li> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the system/service delivering what it's supposed to? How well did Red Rose perform? How useful was the system? How good was the support to LRC?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red rose staff</li> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
<b>Potential for future scaling up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What needs to be done differently into order to be able to increase the scale (e.g., reconciliation of payments to vendors, processes)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> <li>Red Rose staff</li> <li>Beneficiaries (women, men, different family sizes)</li> <li>Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAR</li> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> <li>KII or FGD</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What needs to change? What needs to be praised? What needs to be strengthened?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are other factors need to be taken into account before this could be scaled up?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What investments need to be done, in what departments, and when?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What features not used in the pilot phase should LRC seek to use to improve program performance/management and assist with scale up? (keeping in mind other LRC initiatives such as GIS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Rose staff</li> <li>Red Cross (staff, volunteers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KII</li> <li>FGD</li> </ul>

## Annex 4: TOR After Action Review – WASH E-voucher Pilot

### Background

#### Context

With over 1 million registered Syrian refugees living amongst a national population of around 4 million, Lebanon today has the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world. Syrian refugees – along with over a quarter of a million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon– are struggling to meet their basic needs and are largely dependent on humanitarian assistance since they do not have formal access to the labour market (bar a few sectors where official exceptions have been made). Lebanon’s public services are in many cases too stretched to offer basic services such as health, education and other communal services, which in turn places pressure on host communities.

The Syria crisis has had enormous social and economic impacts on Lebanon; there has been a decline in overall socio-economic indicators and unemployment has doubled. The crisis is affecting Lebanon’s stability; exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities, overstressing basic social services, diminishing trade and investment, plus creating competition for limited and declining resources. In parallel, on-going fighting near the border with Syria, longstanding inter-communal tensions resulting in armed clashes (e.g., Tripoli), security operations leading to arrests across the country, and tensions in the South are contributing to an increased level of tension in Lebanon. Other regional developments, such as the situations in Iraq and Yemen, are also adding to the complexity of the regional dynamics and the insecurity. Lebanon is further subject to a wide range of natural hazards, the biggest threat being a severe earthquake and/or an associated tsunami. Smaller-scale disasters which the country also faces continuously include floods, forest fires, landslides and drought.

#### The Lebanese Red Cross

The Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) is the largest national humanitarian organization in Lebanon; it has 32 branches across Lebanon and more than 5,000 active volunteers. LRC has 46 Emergency Medical Services centres, 4 Dispatch centres operating the national medical emergency hotline, 38 medical social centres, 7 mobile medical units, 12 blood transfusion centres, 6 nursing institutes, 35 youth clubs and 14 Disaster Management units.

The LRC’s Disaster Management Unit (DMU) was formally activated in late 2013 in response to the escalating refugee crisis. Currently, the DMU is working in the following sectors/areas: Basic Assistance (BA), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Psycho-Social Support (PSS) and Contingency Planning (response preparedness).

#### E-voucher pilot

The LRC DMU has been engaging in cash preparedness work to; a) ensure institutionalisation and improvement of the processes established as part of its ongoing multi-purpose cash programme and b) pilot different cash modalities and delivery mechanisms, so that the organisation has a range of options available for delivering assistance across sectors.

This E-voucher pilot brings together both the BA team (which is leading on the rollout of cash as a tool across the DMU) and the WASH team to deliver LRC’s first E-voucher program, providing hygiene items in Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) in Saida. The BA team is the technical lead for the project, working with WASH programmatically to ensure the successful roll out and delivery of assistance. The pilot is supported technically by the British Red Cross, while the German Red Cross is supporting with the cash value transferred to beneficiaries.

The pilot involves the distribution of E-vouchers, using Red Rose CPS technology, to beneficiaries living in ITS in Saida. The cash value was determined by household size, a study of market prices, plus technical input on family needs from the WASH team. Households receive a \$5 base payment and an additional \$5 for every individual in the household. Families are able to redeem the money at contracted shops where they are able to choose from 24 hygiene items. The pilot will last for 3 months, delivering 3 top-ups to each of the participating households.

### After-Action Review purpose and scope

The overall aim of the After-Action Review (AAR) is to review the WASH E-voucher pilot in order for LRC to reflect on; the achievements and challenges, the current suitability of internal systems and procedures, plus the potential for future scaling up of this/similar projects, including other possible uses for the technology. More so, the AAR should document the learnings and include an action plan for the next steps to be taken.

## Purpose

To review:

- The project objectives and reflect on the achievements and challenges.
- LRC's internal systems and procedures, and their suitability for E-voucher programming.
- The use of Red Rose CPS as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party technology provider.

## Scope

Timeframe: August 2017 – March 2018

Key stakeholders/users of review findings: LRC HQ (DMU + LRC support services), LRC Saida DM branch, British Red Cross, German Red Cross

Locations: LRC HQ, Beirut and LRC DM branch, Saida

## **Overarching questions:**

What was planned and achieved for the E-voucher pilot from set-up to implementation? Throughout this process: what went well, what didn't go so well & what needs to be changed for the future?

Specific questions:

The specific questions are divided into two components considering the nature of E-voucher programming – technology and the actual project. This is important to ensure that the support/IT component is reflected on, specifically given that the Red Rose platform has potential uses for LRC beyond the provision of E-vouchers.

### *The technology:*

- Is the system/service delivering what it's supposed to? How well did Red Rose perform: how useful was the system? How good was the support to LRC? How happy were beneficiaries, vendors, and LRC with the system?
- Is the system being used fully? What features weren't used? What is the reason? Did LRC have the right equipment and capacity to be able to make best use of the system?

### *The project:*

- Were the defined needs met? (Were said needs well assessed in the first place?) Were beneficiaries better able to meet their hygiene needs with the voucher than with a hygiene kit? What from their perspective worked well and what didn't work so well?
- How was the shop selection done? What needs to be done differently in order to be able to increase the scale?
- Did the reconciliation and payment of vendors work as a process? Would that process work at scale?
- Are there are other factors that need to be taken into account before this could be scaled up?

## **Utilisation**

### *For LRC:*

In light of the DMU's Quality & Accountability commitments, plus the overall effort being put into learning from different pilots, projects, and programs, this review could be used to:

- Improve existing program design and processes, including the action plan/next steps for this project.
- Inform future interventions and pilots.
- Ensure that the DMU is fulfilling its commitments.

### *For the wider RCRC Movement:*

- To use lessons identified to inform key components and factors to be taken into consideration when setting up e-voucher programming with national societies.
- To contribute to the wider global learning for Cash-Based Programming, which aligns with the BA team vision and LRC DMU strategy to institutionalise cash as a core capacity and support other Movement actors in this area.
- To reflect on the importance of data management, as well as the adoption and integration of new data management systems into existing tools and systems.

## **AAR Outputs**

- Inception report, including proposed methodology (e.g. draft workshop plans), how questions will be tackled

- and how the analysis will be presented.
- Final report, including recommendations and action plan.

### **Review Methodology**

The methodology will be agreed at inception stage but is expected to include the following:

- A desk review of key documents.
- Key informant interviews with LRC staff and volunteers.
- Participatory After-Action Review workshop/s with key staff & volunteers – HQ level & Saida branch.
- Discussions with beneficiaries and vendors involved in the project.

Key informants will include:

- LRC DMU HQ staff & volunteers; Operations and Support Services (both DM & HQ), Basic Assistance team, WASH team, PMER team, Saida Team, staff/volunteers.
- Beneficiaries
- Vendors
- Red Rose
- British and German Red Cross key staff

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Review commissioner: Lama Chamaa, Basic Assistance Program Manager

The review commissioner will provide the strategic oversight and ensure that the review process is adequately resourced and supported.

Review manager: Noor Khalil, Assistant Director, PMER

The review manager will make sure that the review meets all of its objectives within the agreed timeline and budget.