

Action plan of the «Cleaning and rebuilding team (CRT)» of the Institute for Youth Development KULT as part of the «We must not stop!!!» action

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been severely impacted by natural disasters. Floods and landslides have caused immense material damage and a significant loss of human lives. The consequences experienced by the society and economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina are inestimable.

In addition to direct consequences, destroyed public infrastructure and private property, and environmental pollution in its worst form, **one of the biggest issues is the lack of an adequate system of organisation and coordination of clean-up efforts.** The efforts on collecting and distributing humanitarian aid have not been systematised, connected or efficient, the process of cleaning, disinfection and deratization is moving at an intolerably slow pace, no one is talking about rebuilding the houses, and as yet there has been no systematic mobilisation and equipping of voluntary workers.

It can be said that the first activities aimed at helping the afflicted population were initiated and steered through the self-organising of citizens, with the support of the non-governmental sector and donations from entrepreneurs and friends abroad. According to information from the field, the government institutions have failed yet again. Ten days after the floods began adequate permanent locations of the necessary depots have still not been chosen, and there is no word of the requisite thorough preparation of such sites for disposing of the waste.

The Institute for Youth Development KULT is one of many non-governmental organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina which has focused all their capacities, during this difficult period, on helping the flood-affected areas and the afflicted population by collecting aid as well as by taking part in and organising large-scale cleaning and rebuilding activities addressing the aftermath of the floods. While performing our activities, we have been observing the process of providing assistance to the afflicted population and discovered many problems plaguing it:

- 1) The competent institutions have not set up a transparent and adequate system of collecting and distributing aid to the afflicted population,
- 2) The lists of flood-affected buildings and families are lacking, and have not been classified,
- 3) There is no adequate classification of humanitarian aid with respect to the needs of the users,
- 4) There is no adequate reaction to reasonable suspicion and proven misuse of humanitarian aid, nor are there mechanisms for preventing such misuse,
- 5) The volunteer workers, due to poor organisation and not being adequately directed towards priority locations, often waste resources, undermining the optimum effectiveness and decreasing the motivation for work and further contribution,
- 6) There is no developed system of cleaning which would result in a sustainable solution enabling the population to stay in their homes, the waste disposal system is not functioning, and the afflicted families, though severely traumatised and lacking financial means, are left to their own devices in rebuilding their homes.

The Institute wants to provide a systematic approach to the cleaning and rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of the flood. We want to determine a sequence of activities, a «pattern» for repairing the flood-affected buildings, focusing on the citizens' private houses. The Institute wants to coordinate humanitarian aid and volunteer engagement in the best possible manner, so that ineffectiveness would be prevented, and, most importantly, so that the afflicted population would be offered a long-term solution as soon as possible, thus instilling them with the faith that life can go on in such somewhat normal conditions – which is necessary after the traumatic experience they are going through.

In line with the aforementioned, the Institute's action «**We must not stop!**» is aiming to do the following:

- 1) Establish a transparent system of collecting humanitarian aid for repairing the citizens' private houses,
- 2) Provide a precise definition of the procedure for using funds and available volunteers, in order to establish a permanent mechanism aimed at increasing efficiency and maximising the utilization of donations,
- 3) Direct well-organised assistance towards private houses in the flood-affected areas, from cleaning to furnishing them with basic necessities, in order to provide, as quickly as possible, a sustainable way for the population to remain in their homes in the long-term,
- 4) Advocate the necessary and timely engagement of the government with respect to the activities which must accompany individual rebuilding efforts, e.g. a timely disinfection and deratization, adequate depots for disposing of waste removed from homes, mobilising heavy machinery for disposing of the polluted river sludge removed from backyards,
- 5) Create a system enabling fast-flowing credible information about the need for urgent interventions and aid, confirmed directly in the field by the afflicted family/person, to reach the appropriate organisation/institution which can intervene.

Working plan

1. Create a system for collecting funds, with complete transparency: information about the donor and the donation, information about the end users, precise reporting on aid implementation until the final stages, informing donors about the spending of funds. More information available at:

www.floods.mladi.org:

http://mladi.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1978&Itemid=488&lang=en

2. Organising volunteer activities

1. Creating a list of flood-affected locations/towns based on «flood maps» and other credible sources,
2. Detailed list of households in need of assistance, based on visits in the field one day prior to the activity (reconnaissance),
3. Creating a «network of helpers» (youth councils/councils for youth, M1 structure, individual activists we know) in the flood-affected areas, who will be used as contact persons and provide credible information from the field,
4. Defining priority locations and buildings in the identified flood-affected areas, prior to mobilising groups of volunteer workers, so that their activities would be priority-oriented,
5. Classifying aid on the basis of user classification (directly and indirectly threatened),
6. Developing a sequence of activities and regulations for repairing the damage: surface cleaning, detailed cleaning, preparatory activities for rebuilding, disinfection, deratization, construction work, furnishing and equipping,
7. Preparing token care packages with basic supplies for the flood-affected families whose homes are being repaired (as a motivation), as well as providing psychotherapy – they are not left on their own, and their needs are being attended to,
8. Forming a wider base of volunteers, through issuing a public call and direct cooperation with schools and universities,
9. Assigning volunteers to jobs they are willing to perform and are competent for (cleaning, construction work, assisting, etc.),
10. Organising and equipping volunteers from the flood-affected towns or nearby towns,
11. Creating regulations on the organisational structure of volunteer groups and action organisers (creating teams within larger groups of volunteers, setting a base-headquarters, base coordinator, trip leader, commissioner*, group leader, etc.),
12. Conducting a short advisory training (printouts of the instructions for volunteers and a short lecture prior to or during the ride to the flood-affected towns),
13. Networking with experts (epidemiologists, deminers, Civil Protection representatives) who will provide guidance to volunteers in the field, in order to prevent any injury,
14. Creating a Work day agenda (work, breaks, departures) and a code of behaviour for the participants,
15. Appointing a commissioner as representative of the Organiser, who will be visiting people in the field continually and who will be providing reports (photographs and notes) on the activities and results. The report should contain: correct addresses (and names of owners) of houses the volunteers are working in, the number of square meters being cleaned, the type of repairs and the number of volunteers performing the job, in order to manage the process and identify any other needs of the household (until the «turnkey» stage, i.e. when the house is fit for moving in). The commissioner, in addition to monitoring the work, has the role of a «satellite» and an «alarm», and will be forwarding information about urgent cases to the Central office in the Institute, which will then forward received information to appropriate authorities,

16. Regularly updating the contents of central reports with information from reports to be made during each work activity.

3. Advocating towards the government

1. Identifying the burning issues which are within the competencies of the government and are impossible to solve without the participation of official institutions (depots, waste disposal, working with machinery, disinfection and deratization, etc.), writing a list,
2. Identifying institutions competent for the defined problems, and publishing both lists, accompanied by recommendations for action,
3. Issuing constant statements urging the government to take the necessary steps, which will be published via all existing channels of communication at the Institute's disposal (FB pages and web sites dedicated to the Institute's projects, web sites of partners, forwarding to the media),
4. Filming «live stories from the field» with statements from the afflicted population about the necessity of the government's addressing of specific issues,
5. Cooperating with government institutions whenever possible, but while insisting on precise and short deadlines for mutual action, in order to expedite the process,
6. Publishing an analysis of the damaging effect of certain ad hoc solutions (such as animal carcass incineration plants and pits for animal carcass disposal in inhabited areas).

4. Promotional Activities («We must not stop!» campaign)

1. Filming a motivational video with scenes that cannot be seen in the media, and volunteers as heroes of the rebuilding efforts (several, in cooperation with media-partners), with the goal of a constant mobilisation of volunteers,
2. Preparing flyers and posters incorporating detailed instructions on the correct procedure of cleaning and protecting from contracting contagious diseases; having in mind that many among the flood-affected population do not use the internet, while others will be focusing on rebuilding their homes and thus will be forced to abstain from using the internet, these flyers will be distributed to end users and put up in visible places on buildings and public surfaces,
3. Making regular reports on organised activities and promoting such activities on social networks and web platforms,
4. Forming a media support network, with the help of the Institute's partners (source.ba, Hayat TV, eFm radio, etc.).