



## CONTEXT

On September 8, 2023, a powerful earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale struck central Morocco, causing widespread devastation and affecting thousands of people. According to national authorities, 2,946 people died and 5,674 people were injured, while 59,674 houses were estimated to be destroyed or damaged.

Among IFRC support to the Moroccan Red Crescent (MRC) two WASH ERUs were mobilized; an MSM20 led by Swedish Red Cross (SRC) in joint deployment with the Austrian (AutRC), British (BRC) and Spanish Red Cross (SpRC), and an M15 led by French Red Cross (FRC) jointly with SpRC. The close integration of the two ERUs and high adaptability to the context helped provide critical services and relief to affected populations and supported MRC to negotiate further access and mandate in the response.



### Success factors

- 1 Coordination and Integration** - Strong collaboration among ERUs, IFRC, and PNSs included shared resources and plans, eventually merging the two ERUs into one WaSH ERU team. Unified hygiene promotion fostered cohesive community engagement, benefiting other sectors. Harmonized and consolidated WASH ERU activities and updates aimed to increase collective impact and reduce burdens on MRC.
- 2 Adaptation to Local Context** - The ERUs deployed without equipment to support dispersed, mountainous villages of 50-150 households. Normally targeting large displacement sites, the ERUs adapted structures, spreading technical delegates across three provincial hubs. Consultation with government and communities guided local latrine, shower and tap stand designs.
- 3 Financial flexibility** - IFRC did not have existing financial systems in Morocco before the earthquake. To enable immediate response activities, PNSs provided direct funding through their own procedures, allowing the ERU to generate rapid response and impact before pledged IFRC funds became available.



### Recommendations

- 1 Continue to build adaptability to different contexts** - (i.e. rural or urban areas) and with flexible kits or without kits. Utilize rapid market assessments considering local goods, services and modalities to inform ERU implementation plans. Adapt standard objectives, ERU role profiles and structures to meet specific operational needs. Continuous engagement on capacity and plans with NS, government, and communities for harmonized, relevant activities.
- 2 Further streamline IFRC local contracting and procurement procedures and resources in emergencies** - Given ERUs short-term duration, efficient IFRC procurement support structures and flexible back-donor procedures are crucial for impact. WASH ERUs should share field lessons and recommendations with IFRC. NSs and IFRC should ensure proper orientation, guidance, and preparedness for ERU procurement plans.



### WHAT ARE WASH ERUS M15 AND MSM20:

**M15 ERU** provides water treatment and distribution for 15,000 people, up to 225,000 liters/day, and 200,000 liters/day storage. It includes basic sanitation for 5,000 people and water transport for dispersed populations.

**MSM20 ERU** provides sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion for up to 20,000 people, focusing on disease prevention. The team includes sanitation engineers, a hygiene promoter, and local contractors for construction.



## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Working together under IFRC, the interconnectivity between Surge and ERU Teams strongly facilitates or hinders progress and support to the host National Society** - Particularly in large operations like the Morocco earthquake response, with three “sub-teams” across different provinces, technical, management and coordination lines (ie. WASH Coordinator / ERU Team Leader / Field Coordinator) should be clear to both ERU and Surge delegates. This should be highlighted in briefings and correct audience targeting in communications or meetings. Clarifying and reinforcing established operational structures is a shared responsibility with IFRC and ERU Lead PNSs which can increase the efficiency of decision-making across diverse roles and the effectiveness of implementation overall.



Representatives from the WASH ERU, IFRC and MRC conduct a rapid needs assessment, speaking with recently displaced families in Chichaoua province.



An MSM20 ERU delegate works with daily laborers from the village of Tagadirte to properly install and adapt latrine and shower facilities using locally available materials.



In the village of Ait Youssef, women explore sustainable and eco-friendly solutions to menstrual hygiene after the earthquake cut off their regular access to menstrual products. In a workshop led by the WASH ERU and Moroccan Red Crescent volunteers, the women learn how to design and sew reusable and washable menstrual pads.