

## Winterization Coordination Meeting

17 December 2013, Beirut

Name	Inter-Agency Winterization Coordination	Meeting Date	17/12/2013
Meeting Location	UNHCR Lea Bldg	Meeting Time	12:00 PM
Chair person	Jean-Nicolas Beuze Assistant Representative (Coordination), UNHCR	Meeting Duration	1 hr 40 min
Minutes Prepared by	Chadi Ghajar, UNHCR		

	<b>Meeting Agenda</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns raised by the Government of Lebanon</li> <li>Consolidated report on winterization achieved in Shelter Sector</li> <li>Consolidated report on winterization achieved in NFI Sector</li> <li>Statements by coordinating and implementing partners and by any donors present</li> <li>Lessons learned from the Aarsal influx and Storm Alexa for a more proactive / rapid response</li> <li>Next steps and AOB</li> </ol>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Concerns raised by the Government of Lebanon</b>
	<p>Influenced by media reports showing the hardships faced by the Syrian refugees in the stormy weather, the Government of Lebanon is inquiring the international humanitarian agencies about the winterization assistance they are providing. The concerns raised are mostly about refugees living in ITS and unfinished buildings in Bekaa area.</p> <p>The winterization assistance provided by the Agencies during Nov. and the first half of Dec. was not well communicated to GoL and the media at an early stage. In the inter-agency meeting of 13 Dec., an update about the NFI winterization reported achievements was presented.</p> <p>MoSA called for a meeting on 19 Dec. to discuss this issue with concerned agencies.</p>
	<p><u>Action points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agencies to provide updates on achievements to UNHCR and to the media more frequently.</li> <li>Progress in winterization support to be presented to the GoL in the meeting on 19 Dec.</li> </ul>

2.	<b>Consolidated report on winterization achieved in Shelter Sector</b>
	<p>A table was presented showing the progress made by partners in each geographical area. Interventions included the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New arrival kit for ITS</li> <li>- Sealing off kit for unfinished houses</li> <li>- Heavy repair kit for ITS</li> <li>- Light repair for ITS</li> </ul> <p>Agencies have accelerated their activities in Nov. and first half of Dec. in order to finish a high percentage of the planned activities before the end of the year.</p> <p>The GoL offered assistance to accelerate the assistance and to enable some areas that are difficult to access in bad weather to be reached. Concerned agencies were consulted and they exceptionally approved logistic assistance from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to transport some items to targeted areas. The LAF is seen as a positive and neutral institution in Lebanon, not currently engaged in any armed action, nevertheless, it was made clear that staff members of the Agencies had to conduct the distribution to the beneficiaries, not the LAF personnel.</p> <p>A joint-agencies task force is currently working on a GIS tool to give more precision to the locations of ITS and unfinished buildings where interventions are taking place.</p>
3.	<b>Consolidated report on winterization achieved in NFI Sector</b>
	<p>The NFI winterization targeting approach was briefly presented showing different categories of beneficiaries, giving an estimated caseload of 90,500 HH by the end of winter 2013-14.</p> <p>NFI winterisation distribution activities reported by partners were compiled in tables, showing the very incomplete reporting by agencies, especially coordinating partners, which means that we cannot really know where gaps in the programme still remain.</p> <p>The presentation (updated with the statistics reported by 19 Dec) is disseminated with these notes). The main conclusions were as follows:</p> <p><u>Lessons Learned</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. VASyR targeting was not necessarily appropriate for winterization ⇒ take a simpler, easier to understand, more blanket approach, &amp; inform people beforehand.</li> <li>2. Registered caseload split between 2 IPs in some places (i.e. the complication of the registered living in ITS) ⇒ Division of responsibilities to be clear (e.g. UNHCR to cover all registered, regardless of where they live).</li> <li>3. Slow start by everybody, but esp. CPs ⇒ 2014 winter planning should start in Apr, implementation in Oct.</li> <li>4. CSC cards distributed ≠ cash spent ⇒ need to analyse the Bank's data on cash withdrawn.</li> </ol>

	<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Reporting, especially by some cooperating partners, has been poor ⇒ Ask donors to prompt them.</li> <li>6. The vulnerable registered below 500m were also in need ⇒ Use the 24,000 cards distributed in North in place of hygiene kits for a one-off transfer of \$100.</li> <li>7. Occupants of ITS were all targeted irrespective of registration/vulnerability, but maybe not yet assisted ⇒ Use 11 SDCs to distribute 550 additional stoves.</li> <li>8. 25% of those excluded now need to be 're-included' following verification of VASyR ⇒ Give them support retrospectively but this is a big data management challenge.</li> </ol> <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Data management is the biggest challenge – almost unable to cope with the new cash transfer system ⇒ Massive investment urgently needed in a system for card &amp; cash management, that goes beyond UNHCR's own programmatic needs, to cover all registered + unregistered.</li> <li>10. The Aarsal influx + Winter Storm Alex experience ⇒ Contingency planning workshop based around a mass influx into Shebaa during a winter storm !</li> <li>11. Joint M&amp;E for winterization ⇒ Pre-distribution survey conducted, post-distribution monitoring planned, &amp; external evaluation (in Feb) will analyze gaps, etc.</li> </ol>
	<p><u>Action points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies are requested to report their winterization achievements to UNHCR ASAP.</li> <li>• UNHCR has agreed to make a one-off \$100 winterization transfer to the 24,000 HH which DRC distributed CSC cards to in place of monetized hygiene/baby kits, during Dec.</li> <li>• In response to MoSA's initiative to use 11 SDCs to distribute heating stoves to refugee HH living in ITS who, although all targeted, may have been missed by cooperating partners covering this caseload, UNHCR has agreed to supply each with 50 stoves and try to obtain data from these partners on who might have been missed. DRC has agreed to establish a desk staffed by volunteers, in each of the 11 SDCs to try to limit the donation of these stoves only to refugee HH living in ITS whom UNHCR states might have been missed.</li> <li>• The 're-included' (following VASyR verification) need to be provided with cards and blankets and will receive the full cash winterization package, irrespective of the month they are first assisted. The challenge will be managing the data and doing it as quickly as possible.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Statements by coordinating and implementing partners and by any donors present</b></p>
	<p>Partners raised the issue of CSC cards management. Currently, agencies can load cards managed by another agency based on a bilateral agreement. UNHCR is planning to take over the management of</p>

	<p>the cards (i.e. the relationship with the bank and directly with partners on card activation, loading, blocking, etc.) from DRC in Feb. 2014. Concerning cards that some agencies are distributing to unregistered; there is currently no mechanism for UNHCR (or one of its IPs) to assume management of these cards once the cardholder gets registered.</p> <p>Partners asked to combine the reporting requirement at both field and national level in order to avoid double reporting. Regular and consistent reporting in support of coordination has to be considered in light of the forthcoming decentralization and the adoption of “Activity Info”.</p> <p>Verification of the VASyR results is taking too long and needs to be given a high priority. It is estimated that about 25% of refugees who were excluded will be re-included (i.e. 25% of 35% = 9% of the total registered refugee population); hence they will be eligible for winterization assistance. These beneficiaries will get winterization assistance retroactively, i.e they will receive the whole package back to Nov., irrespective of the month they are ‘re-included’. Partners complained about the delay in receiving from UNHCR the lists of Progres numbers of the re-included beneficiaries.</p> <p>Some agencies are initiating additional assistance to cover gaps resulting from the targeting (i.e. they are targeting those whom the VASyR targeting has excluded !).</p> <p>Consultation with beneficiaries, particularly residents of ITS and the unregistered, revealed that they were not well informed about the winterization assistance – they did not know who was eligible, why, or what they should receive.</p> <p>The issue of geographical coverage was discussed. Partners are encouraged to focus their interventions in areas where they could cover all sectoral interventions, or at least all those for which cash/cards will be the transfer modality in the future.</p> <p>Data Management needs to be given a higher priority, especially, in order to be able to identify ITS residents, whether registered or unregistered. It is still unclear whether RAIS (Refugee Assistance Information System) will be launched as the main refugee data management platform for the cross-sectoral cash programme).</p>
	<p><u>Action points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR acknowledged its weakness in mass information, which was being addressed with the establishment of a team dedicated to this function.</li> <li>• Clear geographical divisions of responsibility with no overlaps is a pre-requisite for the Cash Programme to work properly, and only UNHCR can take the initiative in achieving this.</li> <li>• Given that some of the resources allocated for winterization are still not expended, partners are encouraged to increase their caseloads by including beneficiaries from Category C – Persons with special needs, according to their own targeting criteria.</li> <li>• UNHCR has to put in place a data management system to support card management for all agencies providing cash, to both the registered and unregistered refugee populations, rather than solely in support of its own more limited cash transfer programme.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given the importance of coordination, ECHO, as a major donor, reminded its partners that it requires them to report on their activities to the concerned sector leads on a regular basis.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Lessons learned from the Arsal influx and Storm Alexa for a more proactive / rapid response</b>
	<p>The intervention in Arsal was initially slow and it demonstrated that contingency planning has not been linked to any specific scenario or area. This needs to be remedied and agencies are expected to have a better readiness when it comes to human and material resources to cope with an emergency.</p> <p>The one month criterion in the Newcomers SOP will be exceptionally extended allowing refugees to receive assistance in case they could not register with UNHCR in one month. Currently, the local authorities are registering refugees and coordinating the lists with intervening agencies.</p>
	<p><u>Action points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agencies are requested to report their interventions for the Arsal influx. UNHCR (Coordination) will compile them and publish a summary report.</li> <li>UNHCR (Coordination) will organize a lessons learned exercise for the Arsal response, also looking forward to a future emergency situation elsewhere. This could be combined with the lessons learned from Winter Storm Alexa.</li> </ul>

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