

Working Group on Social Cohesion Minutes – 28 March 2014 – Beirut

Meeting			
Name	Working Group on Social Cohesion	Meeting Date	28/03/2014
Meeting Location	UNDP-6 th floor	Meeting Time	09:30 A.M
Co-Chair person	Shombi Sharp –UNDP Sabine Fara – MOSA Anna Leer-UNHCR	Meeting Duration	1.5 hours
Minutes Prepared by	Afke Bootsman		

Representative of :

Main discussion points

1. Presentation of Search For Common Ground report: Dialogue and Local Response Mechanisms to Conflict
2. Mid-term review of the RRP
3. Activity Info Reporting
4. Setting up of Working Groups at the Local Level
5. Social Cohesion Chapter of the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment
6. INQAL
7. VASyr 2014

Summary of discussions and action points

1	<p>Presentation of Search For Common Ground (SfCG) report: Dialogue and Local Response Mechanisms to Conflict</p> <p>The INGO Search for Common Ground provided a presentation of the main findings of its Conflict Scan in Tripoli and South on 'Dialogue and Local Response Mechanisms to Conflict'. The PPT is annexed to those minutes. SfCG will continue to assess the peace and conflict drivers on a regular basis. The next one is scheduled for June. SfCG has been working with several local partners to ensure their conflict scan was inclusive and representative.</p> <p>During the Q&A the following questions were discussed:</p> <p>- Q: During the presentation it was mentioned that Lebanese and Syrians prefer to reside in separate neighborhoods. Did this conclusion come from the group themselves or was a specific question included in the questionnaire?</p> <p>A: The questionnaire asked the open question 'where in your day to day life do you see most separation'? So the conclusion came out from the people themselves during focus group discussions. Especially in the South people prefer not to live in the same neighborhoods. It was mentioned that every day interactions do not pose a problem, but it was stated by Syrians that they prefer to live separately.</p> <p>- Q: The interesting element of the SfC Conflict Scan was that perceptions were tested. How many of the Lebanese actually were affected by a decrease in salaries?</p> <p>A: Overall finding showed that the majority of the surveyed Lebanese is not facing a direct decrease in salary. However, the SfC conflict scan may not be able to give a conclusive answer to this question.</p> <p>Q: Was there any positive impact on the Lebanese side by the presence of refugees?</p> <p>A: This wasn't specifically focused on during focus groups. However the study shows that there are a number of peace drivers that are untapped such as the mutual understanding based on the same language and similar culture. However at the same time Lebanese see Syrians as low educated migrant workers. Especially in the South there were many stereo types regarding women and how conservative Syrians are.</p>
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	<p>During the discussion the NGO Al Majmoua informed the SC working group that economic issues are indeed a driver for tensions. Lebanese do not feel the positive economic impact of the influx of Syrians. Syrians do not have cars that need to be maintained and only attend to the real basic needs (for example no funds are spent on beauty salons). The bulk of their available resources is spent on food and ordinary Lebanese do not benefit from this, only the large suppliers. Overall, Lebanese do not feel the positive impact of the Syrians at the community level.</p> <p>Al Majmoua also observes that Lebanese and Syrian women don't want to receive training anymore together. In rural areas this stand-off is less. It seems to be related to the socioeconomic level of women. With youth it takes Al Majmoua two consecutive sessions for them to interact while with women it takes 4-5 sessions before the interaction starts. This has led the NGO to rethink the services that are being provided and how important it is to work with cohorts of beneficiaries: the same group receiving the same activities in order to reinforce relationships. The recommendation is to build-in time for people to get to know each other in addition to implement the actual activities.</p> <p>SfCG informed the group that resorting to a third partner to solve conflicts is very high. At the moment there are no structures in place to provide a mediator to prevent conflict or avoid tensions to increase. The focus group discussions proved to be an effective way for Syrians and Lebanese to sit and talk together about sensitive topics. The question of Syrian representation may need to be redefined. This point has been echoed by Mercy Corps who currently is assessing how to integrate Syrians into the decision making of municipalities. It was stressed that NGOs can't push the agenda to include Syrians but that it needs to be a natural process. Mercy Corps is willing to share their findings with the members of the SC working group.</p> <p>In the final part of the discussion, SfCG emphasized the need for CSPs to lead to continuous dialogue and engagement from both communities, and not to be only one-off projects. AlMajmoua also pointed out that there is a need to sensitize the 'frontline' workers of the different humanitarian partners on conflict and tolerance, as they are generally young, inexperienced and sometimes prejudiced towards the refugees.</p> <p>Action Point: A half-day workshop will be organized about local conflict mechanisms and other participatory mechanisms set up through the activities of the sector, such as CSPs, to see how to improve the social cohesion impact of projects that aim to address the needs of both Lebanese and refugees at the community level. Focus is on lessons learnt, preparing guidelines and/or a checklist that can be shared with other sectors as well.</p>
2	Activity Info and Reporting
	<p>It was concluded that the revised Social Cohesion indicators have worked out well.</p> <p>The members of the SC WG received a table that shows which members have appealed for funding under the RRP6 and which have reported in Activity Info until now.</p> <p>Action Point: All non-reporting Organizations have been requested to share with the Sector Lead why they are not reporting: no funds received, funds received but implementation starts later, other reasons.</p> <p>Action Point: Since Activity Info is only a 'net-reporting' tool, ongoing project activities are not being recorded. Therefore all organizations are asked to share their ongoing activities with the Sector Lead in order to capture important developments in the monthly narrative.</p>
3	RRP6 Mid-Term Review
	<p>The timeline of the RRP MTR was presented. The members were informed that the revised financial submissions will be done through a new module of Activity Info. All members will receive training during the month of April on how to submit their financial proposals. The Activity Info system will be open from 1-9 May to make the submissions.</p> <p>The members agreed to maintain the strategic priorities as they were defined for the RRP6. Those priorities will be presented during the Inter-Agency meeting of April 4.</p> <p>Action Point: The Sector Lead will provide updates when they become available</p>

4	General Updates
	<p>- Roll-out of Field Level Working Groups: The outreach with the UNHCR field offices has been completed. The conclusion is that the situation at the local level is diverse. For the moment there is only one SC WG in the Bekaa. The overall objective is to improve coordination throughout the entire sector. UNDP and UNHCR will move forward on this and subsequent updates will be shared when they become available. In the set-up of any local SC WG the work of the CSP committees will be taken into account.</p> <p>- MSNA: All members who have contributed in the drafting of the Social Cohesion chapter of the MSNA process have been thanked. The deadline to provide inputs by sector members is 28 March 2014. This document will be the basis to start the RRP6 MTR.</p> <p>- INQAL: UNHCR has launched the process to produce 'Interagency Questions and Answers on Humanitarian Services and Assistance in Lebanon' which can be seen as the 'Yellow Pages' of the humanitarian operation in Lebanon. Action Point: The Sector Lead will share draft questions with the members of the SC WG to ensure that all essential questions are captured.</p> <p>- VaSyR: The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees will take place in May. Action Point: The focus group and household survey templates will be shared for inputs with the SC WG members.</p>
5.	Next meeting
	The next meeting is tentatively planned for April 30.

Participants list

Name	Organization
Shombi Sharp	UNDP
Afke Bootsman	UNDP
Anna Leer	UNHCR
Bastien Revel	UNDP
Marina Iannissotto	ACF
Hart Ford	ACTED
Alia FARHAT	Al Majmoua
Mihaela Campean	Amel Association
Maureen Mahfouz	Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center
Benedikt Braumer	Forum ZFD
Nathalie Bekdache	International Alert
Victoria Stanski	Mercy Corps
sabine Farah	MOSA
Elisa Dari	Search for Common Ground
Emily Jacquard	Search for Common Ground
Catherine Whybrow	Solidar Switzerland
Joanna Nassar	UNDP
Nancy MAROUN	UNDP
Serge Berthomieu	UNHCR
Elena Guseva	UNHCR
Peter John Grzic	UNRWA

