

CwC Meeting 19th January 2016 – Minutes

Chair: Rose Foran – Internews

Organizations in attendance: Humanity Crew, UNHCR, Save the Children, IFRC, Oxfam, DRC, Better Days for Moria (BdM), Hliactida (Local NGO), MercyCorps, Translators Without Borders (TWB)

Agenda items

1. Communication of cold weather conditions

- How to ensure that refugees will face more cold weather along the route. Importance in communicating to them the message of keeping their blankets.
- **BdM**: In December they printed pictures of the route with snow in Croatia with a sign indicating to keep their blankets and this was very helpful for the refugees.
- **MercyCorps**: Doing similar messaging with photos: when giving them direction to where to go when they get off the bus through pictures.
- **UNHCR**: Explained the “red-line” in concern with the onward movement and stressed the importance of the message for refugees to keep their blankets and inform them on the cold weather.
- **Save the Children**: We should also get across the message that in the borders along the route the establishments are not good (e.g. sleeping in petrol-stations) so they will probably not get extra dry clothes or blankets.
- **Internews**: Everyone agreed on the importance to link the message with a photo.
- **Humanity Crew**: It is important also to teach the refugees how to handle really cold weather, for example wearing layers of clothes. Internews added that messaging of safety during cold weather should also be delivered for example in case of hypothermia and other symptoms to call a doctor, put the emergency blankets on the bare feet and then the shoes, being careful on icy-streets etc.

BdM: mentioned the issue of not having access to the UNHCR buses when they arrive in Moria so they can help refugees with directions – where to get registered, not to change money with people who rush the buses when they arrive.

Internews: There is a big problem in general in the buses-arrival area in Moria that should be organized and cleared from taxis, people that want to exchange money etc. Maybe UNHCR should look into it. UNHCR replied by saying when UNHCR staff is there then there are no problems but they don't have enough capacity. Furthermore, this is one of the top issues in the UNHCR agenda – they are waiting for the authorities to manage that space. BdM mentioned that in the last days they called the police a couple of times to handle the taxi-drivers and Roma in that particular space outside Moria.

2. Communication in a crisis situation

-**Humanity Crew**: Described the crisis situation on Sunday, when bad weather caused ferry delays. People gathered at the pool hall by the port, which is abandoned and condemned

for many years. Basic response of keeping people warm, distributing food, etc was immediately undertaken. UNHCR tried to take people to Kara Tepe, but if they were taken back to the sites then they had to find their own way to come back to the port. People in survival mode forced open the hall. Internews communicated information on the ferries schedules to mitigate some of the panic on Sunday.

-Internews: We collected the most simple and accurate information from the ferry companies and then disseminated that info through WhatsApp groups, travel agencies and throughout the pool-hall with the help of IFRC's megaphones and our Farsi and Arabic speaking colleagues. When information started to change constantly then we brought a whiteboard in the pool-hall writing the changing info. The question we want to raise in this meeting is what to do in crisis situations as an information response? What should we do in a future situation?

BdM: The information in such cases should be distributed in town because we cannot prevent them from leaving the sites. TWB asked how was the info delivered in the sites last Sunday? DRC replied by reading it out-loud but not preventing them from leaving the sites. Humanity Crew stressed the importance of the info to be given clearly that once they are taken back to the sites (from the port) they will not be taken by UNHCR buses back to the port.

IFRC: In regard with last Sunday, partners working at the pool-hall should have met at some point in order to communicate between themselves the updated key-messages. Use the mobile-megaphones next time and take into consideration that a lot of the refugees speak also Urdu or Hindi. TWB said that they can provide all of the languages instantly next time.

UNHCR: Stressed the importance of emergency messaging as a response to certain situations, however the dissemination of information is difficult and being quick, inclusive of a solution and obeying rules is crucial. For example the change of ferries is considered onward movement information by UNHCR but nevertheless in a situation like the one of last Sunday it can be given out. Internews stressed the importance of giving correct information, which can save lives, and when gaps are met it is our responsibility to bridge them.

IFRC: Suggested to prepare a one-pager guideline for emergency situations (action point of meeting).

Internews: Informed everyone that we emailed everyone on the upcoming ferry strike (20-22 January) and TWB added that they will email a general information regarding all the islands.

Internews: Presented the Rumours Issue #01 and asked whoever is interested in it to subscribe to the weekly updates mailing list. The target audience of this project are the refugees/affected community.

Oxfam: Asked if there is also engagement with the host communities. Internews replied yes but more has to be done. UNHCR suggested that whatever suggestions are

encountered or topics of discussions should be communicated to Rose. Communication with the host communities is going on through coordination meetings, volunteers, interaction with the authorities but more suggestions from this meeting group are more than welcome. (Raised as an agenda point for the next meeting).

IRC: Pointed out the need to have a TOR (Terms of Reference). Internews replied that one will be drafted by them.

Oxfam: Wondered about the relation of host communities with the refugees, if there is a stigma or tensions? DRC replied that so far there were no tensions or reporting of such. UNHCR underlined the extreme generosity from the people of Lesvos even though they are having really hard times with the economic crisis in Greece but also the impact/shock of the refugee crisis.

Hliactida: Explained the impact of the economic crisis in Greece and that when a local sees all the help delivered to the refugees then there is a problem. NGO Hliactida is taking care and supporting with food and more also local families and stressed the importance that the international humanitarian NGOs working on the island hire a lot of local people but the problem for further integration of the locals in all this is the barrier of the language. This big gap make the locals see us as the enemy. A rumour through the host community is that the locals think that all the humanitarian NGOs working with the refugees here, get money from the Greek government. Extremely important and urgent to clarify the reality to the locals/host community.

Hliactida: Mentioned a big warehouse they have but not enough people to manage it and BdM could manage it with local volunteers whenever they want.

IFRC: Mentioned that they work closely with the Hellenic Red Cross and are trying to get a volunteer's manager so as to implement the mobilization of volunteers. IFRC also has a new YouTube page [.https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnvcq201XdBfMh5_6Toey2g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnvcq201XdBfMh5_6Toey2g)

Humanity Crew: They are working on the possibility to assisting with psychosocial support the host community and the local volunteers.

Updates on communication activities

IFRC: New series of information communication programs. PSS, restoring families and focus groups discussions to see what new programs are needed are currently carried out by IFRC now. They are need of Farsi translators. They will carry out assessments on what people think of the Red Cross. The volunteer tool-kit is finally out. If anyone have ideas on new programs then they should contact Meena from IFRC.

Humanity Crew: Informed the people at the meeting that they are following the most vulnerable cases they had at Pipka, online throughout their route. Can we connect with other CwC working groups along the route, in other locations?

TWB: They are meeting with a lot of partners and receiving many of demands so they'll make a form so partners can fill in mentioning the level urgency.