

Minutes of the National Basic Assistance Working Group Meeting Beirut, 27 April 2018

Meeting Location	UNHCR, S&K building, B1 Conference Room	Meeting Time	2:00 P.M.
Chair persons	Khalil Dagher (UNHCR) Hadi Haddad (MoSA)	Meeting Duration	2 Hrs.
Minutes by	Hiba Taha		
18 Represented Agencies	ACF, ACTED, ANERA, CALP, CAMELEON, Caritas Lebanon, Dorcas, DFID, ECHO, NRC, Oxfam, RI, SIF, Solidar Suisse, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WVI		
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sector Updates 2. Brainstorming on the Basic Assistance Sector M&E Framework 3. Presentation by UNHCR: Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) 4. Operational Update: 2018 Recalibration of the Targeting Model (Desk Formula V3) 5. Operational Update: LOUISE 6. AOB 		

1. Sector Updates:

a) Targeting Assistance

- 69,193 vulnerable households received cash based interventions in March 2018 (RAIS, AI):
- o 59,526 SYR HHs;
 - o 9,598 PRS HHs;
 - o 789 LEB HHs;
 - o 25,688 SYR HHs (children focused cash grant – UNICEF);
 - o \$12,469,608 injected in the local economy in forms of direct cash assistance.

b) Core Group Elections

- o ACF is the new Basic Assistance Sector co-lead;
- o Out of 20 national and international NGOs contacted, 13 agencies have registered and voted;
- o The election for two INGO members is ongoing: 20 April – 4 May. The candidates are RI, ACTED and SCI;
- o The term of the co-lead and core group is one year;
- o Only national and international NGOs are eligible to vote.

c) Sector Work Plan

- o The sector work plan comprises seven thematic areas to be addressed in 2018:
 - Winter assistance,
 - Targeting/recalibration of the desk formula,
 - VASyR 2018,
 - The sector's M&E framework,
 - Specific operational areas (SOP Tool Box, Communication with Communities sub-working group, revisiting the S/MEB),

- Thematic discussions around the Graduation approach, Social protection and safety nets as well as the Protection Dividends of Cash
- LCRP 2019
- The work plan to be shared with the working group for feedback;

2. Brainstorming on the Basic Assistance Sector M&E Framework

- The LCRP M&E framework includes four strategic objectives, which incorporate six impact statements;
- Each sector has a set of outcomes that converge into one or more impact statements. Every sector outcome in turn, comprises outputs and activities;
- On the sector level, the BA sector contributes to strategic objectives number 2-Provide immediate assistance to vulnerable populations and 3- Support service provision through national system;
- The impact statements associated, respectively, with the above mentioned objectives and aligned with the sector's log frame are i) Immediate humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations are met and ii) Vulnerable populations have equitable access to basic services through national systems;
- The framework consists of four monitoring levels: Funding level, Activity/output level, Outcome level and Impact level;
- Each monitoring level relies on a different set of tracking systems, surveys, assessments and tools;
- The M&E framework of the LCRP on the IS level is centered around key evaluation questions categorized into What's so and So What type of questions. Each category would feed into different aspects of the M&E;
- The BA sector's M&E follows the same logic. Notably the sector is much more efficient in answering What's so questions than So What questions;
- The next steps would be to identify the key evaluation questions within the sector and strengthen the evidence base by compiling research/assessments/surveys of partners while identifying data and knowledge gaps;
- Partners are not sharing their assessments regularly. The sector typically looks at the trends within the existing literature, which would feed into the sector's strategy;
- **Action Point:**
 - ✓ Regular separate sessions to be organized for BA partners to share their impact monitoring assessments
 - ✓ All assessments to be added to the [Assessment Registry](#)

3. Presentation by UNHCR: Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

- UNHCR is piloting and testing a GRM as a first attempt to establish such systems in the context of the Basic Assistance sector;
- It addresses the discontinuation of cash assistance due to a change in eligibility;
- It is a mechanism put in place to assist individuals discontinued from assistance, (which can be related to food and health in addition to cash) rather than excluded;
- 4,500 individuals discontinued from assistance last year;
- It targets a maximum of 1,500 families either starting April or May;
- The objective is to optimize and implement GRM by November 2018;

- The main challenges of the system are i) the system does not increase UNHCR's accountability toward the people it serves, iii) feedback/complaints/voices of refugees are not taken into consideration;
- The eligibility criteria are still being discussed;
- In case individuals' information are updated as a result of the re-estimation of the desk formula, the ranking of other beneficiaries will not be affected, the 1,500 families will be ranked separately;
- The communication protocol regarding the application to the program is a passive process relative to the beneficiaries because UNHCR chooses the families to be included;

4. Operational Update: 2018 Recalibration of the Targeting Model (Desk Formula V3)

- The overall objective of this annual exercise is to enhance the multi-purpose cash targeting system, through the re-estimation of the regression model, the development of a validation methodology and the enhancement of the Grievance Redress Mechanism;
- A tentative timeline has been adopted since last February until the actual implementation of the revised targeting system in November;
- The May-June period is the initial research phase, linked to the VASyR data collection;
- From July until September, feedback to be gathered from beneficiaries, and different operational stakeholders and forums such as the working groups, the inter-sector and the HCT;
- In November, decisions to be made whether beneficiaries will be removed or added to cash assistance programs;
- The timeframe is rigid and the process is moving forward according to the agreed upon timeline;
- Refugees should be informed two months in advance about their removal or inclusion in the cash assistance programs;
- Communication with beneficiaries is critical as they have to know the reasons of their exclusion or inclusion in an appropriate way through actors on the ground and in the field;
- There is an added value in sharing the SMS, that will be sent to beneficiaries, to a wide audience;
- It is critical to demystify the desk formula, understand its limitations. All the relevant actors should have the same level of understanding with regards to what it can and cannot achieve;
- **Action Points:**
 - ✓ The BA sector to be involved on the technical and operational side of the process;
 - ✓ The working group to communicate its feedback, now at the inception phase, to the researchers, particularly regarding what to be conducted differently from last year;

5. Operational Update: LOUISE

- LOUISE is the Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organisational System for e-Cards, which is a common platform for the delivery of humanitarian cash based programs in Lebanon. It is co-managed by WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF;
- LOUISE has a common card governing body and steering committee;
- On the operational side, work streams are harmonized with regards to Assessment/targeting, Delivery/service provision, financial transactions and M&E/IM;
- The updates on the LOUISE:

- ✓ The establishment of a call centre, to be launched on the 1st of July and co-managed by the three agencies. The objective of the call centre is to facilitate the response to queries and complaints related to cash programs administered through the common card;
 - ✓ The enhancement of the card distribution mechanism;
 - ✓ The adoption of common indicators for the M&E framework;
 - ✓ The launch of an information management portal: iamlouise.com.
- Complaints through the call centre are immediately addressed. Only the aggregation of data happens monthly;
 - Questions/complaints unrelated to cash are referred to the relevant actors: four referral pathways are in place and individuals in the call centre are trained to answer non-cash related queries;
 - VASyR and LOUISE are two different concepts, though LOUISE is based on concepts and results drawn from the VASyR;

6. AOB

- A link will be sent to members of the working group to vote for the election of INGOs ' membership;
- The working group to discuss the established of a communications with communities sub-working group.