

ARMENIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

July - September 2021



KEY FIGURES

USD 49.3 M

Total Financial Requirements for the Inter-Agency Response Plan (from October 2020 until end of December 2021)

28,940

Refugee-like population from NK
(Source: Various Government of Armenia Updates)

71%

Women and children among the people in a refugee-like situation (PRLS)

2,073

Individuals reached by the monthly food assistance (by WFP)

2,389

Persons reached through Protection Monitoring exercise

14,000

individuals from NK received cash assistance

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Coordination:** The UN system in Armenia continues to operate with a structure under the lead of the Resident Coordinator's Office and UNHCR to coordinate humanitarian efforts and maximize efficiency of the response in Armenia to the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict.
- **Protection:** In partnership with KASA Foundation UNHCR launched new hotline on 13 August. A total of 89 unique calls concerning documentation, health issues, and other services were received and answered.
- **Shelter and NFI:** UNHCR through Mission Armenia provided NFI assistance to 1,102 families (6,205 persons) distributing 70 cooking kits to 91 families (522 beneficiaries), 203 jerry cans to 94 families (556 persons), and 379 miscellaneous items including furniture, refrigerators, gas stove and other equipment to 917 families (5,127 persons).

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, provided cash support (including for rental subsidy) to 14,000 displaced persons.
- **Cash:** ICRC, through ARCS, supported 1,609 host families hosting 4,996 displaced persons in July 2021, followed by post-distribution monitoring of 160 families.
- **Food Security and Nutrition:** WFP, in collaboration with Mission Armenia (MA), provided 853 households (2,073 individuals) with in-kind assistance in Shirak region. Action Against Hunger, with support of their partner MA, provided in-kind food assistance to 677 households in Kotayk, Ararat, and Yerevan. UNICEF reached 2,650 individuals with nutrition support in the provinces of Armavir, Ararat, Kotayk, Vayots Dzor, and Syunik.
- **Health:** IOM Armenia completed provision of primary health care services to the displaced from NK within the framework of the CERF Project by the end of July: The National Center for Infectious Diseases implemented 188 visits to more than 100 communities of all ten provinces of Armenia. Since the beginning of the IARP, and as of end of July, the mobile health teams screened 9,985 individuals, 3,335 individuals were referred for specialized medical treatment, and 2,197 individuals received symptomatic treatment. IOM's implementing partner INTRA Mental Health Centre conducted psychological assessment of 502 individuals displaced from NK.
- **Early Recovery:** UNDP continued its efforts for introduction of energy efficiency measures in Armenian communities. To decrease energy consumption and thus expenditures in Vardenis municipality, installation of 37 kW photovoltaic (PV) systems and upgrading streetlights to L.E.D. luminaires have been started (all 15,820 inhabitants benefit from it, including 237 refugee-like individuals). The installation is ongoing, and expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Figure 1: Map of distribution of people in a refugee-like situation from NK in Armenia

Armenia - People in a refugee-like situation from NK

Information Management Working Group (IMWG) product supported by UNRCO and UNHCR



Printing date: 09 Nov 2021. Sources: Migration Services, UNHCR, PIN and Aragatsotn, Ararat, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush marzpetarans, Yerevan municipality
Author: UNHCR - Armenia Feedback: illangas@unhcr.org Filename: CSG_PiARLS_A4P_20211109

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

On 27 September 2020, hostilities broke out along the line of contact (LoC) and quickly expanded to other areas in and around Nagorno Karabakh (NK), until a nine-point tripartite statement was signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Federation of Russia during the night of 9-10 November. In the period July-September 2021, the situation along the LoC was very tense, with numerous incidents reported, especially in the months of August and September.

As at the end of September, according to the population data collated by the inter-agency Information Management Working Group (IMWG), some 28,940¹ persons are still in a refugee-like situation in Armenia. Distribution of population across the provinces is illustrated in *Figure 1* above.

The 9 November tripartite ceasefire agreement is currently holding, with some incidents being reported from the new Line of Contact. Despite the presence of several checkpoints, movement between Armenia and NK is relatively unrestricted for people living in a refugee-like situation, with the Government of Armenia providing free bus services. The number of refugee-like population returning remains steady. The total number of individuals directly observed boarding buses for NK, since November 2020, stands at 40,485 individuals, but nature and sustainability of those who have traveled to NK are yet to be determined and several persons declared have used the buses several times. Currently, on average, one bus per day departs from Yerevan.

The initial Inter-Agency Response Plan (IARP) was launched in January 2021 for a period of nine months (October 2020 – June 2021) for coordinating the response for 90,000 individuals settling in Armenia. Since then, many of these individuals have moved back to NK and some 28,940 refugee-like individuals remain in Armenia. In this context, it was agreed between the IARP partners and the Government of Armenia to extend the [IARP](#) for six more months, until December 2021 and to support the humanitarian needs of the remaining refugee-like population.

The humanitarian response is implemented under severe COVID-19 pandemic conditions, given that only about 10 per cent of the overall population in Armenia are fully vaccinated (For additional COVID-19 related information, please refer to the UN Weekly Situation Report on COVID-19 in Armenia).

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Protection Working Group

Current Situation

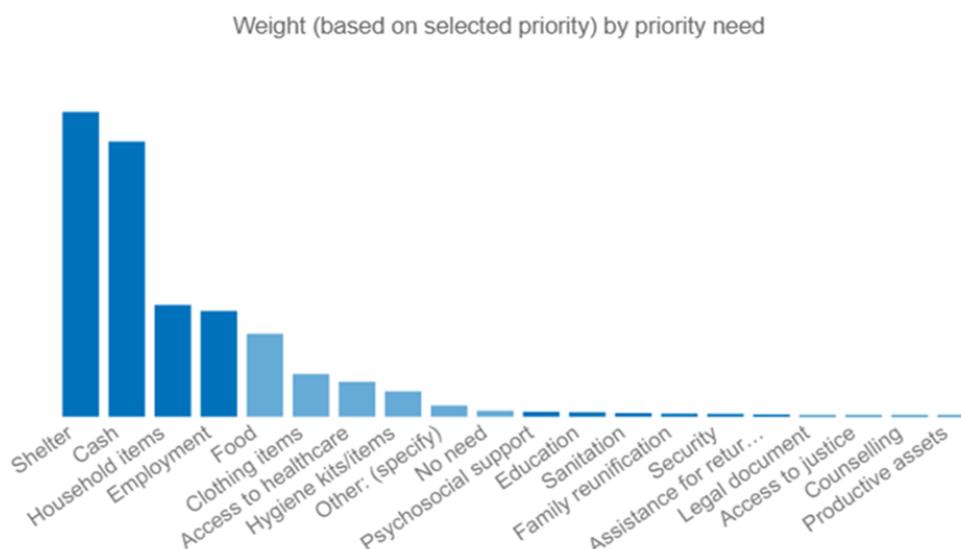
- The Protection Working Group (PWG) continued to coordinate protection activities at the national, regional and local levels, organizing interventions, seeking consensus on issues, creating partnerships and linkages for better prioritization of available resources with an overall goal of enhancing the protection of persons in a refugee-like situation (PRLS) from Nagorno-Karabakh (NK). The situation remains fluid and requires continuous monitoring at all levels. Separate child protection and education sub-working groups no longer exist. The PWG currently operates with thematic co-leading, by UNHCR and UNICEF, respectively. Protection monitoring includes key informant interviews in collective centres. This exercise aims to provide indications on return intentions, living conditions, access to services, financial challenges, and social cohesion and security. Three priority needs were identified through the protection monitoring activity: shelter, cash, household items, which are partially covered by UNHCR's and partners' direct interventions.

Identified Priority Needs

The following main needs – in order of priority – were identified in the [Mid-year Protection Monitoring Report January-June 2021](#) (see figure 2): Shelter, Cash, Household items, Employment, Food, Clothing items, Access to healthcare, Hygiene kits/items, and so on.

¹ This is the last population estimate prior to the publication of this Update, which is based on updates provided by Government authorities in late October. Data collected is from eight of the eleven provinces.

Figure 2: Needs identified by Protection Monitoring conducted January to June 2021



Achievements and Impact

- In September 2021 UNHCR continued conducting Protection monitoring with its implementing partner Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS), and Protection monitoring is conducted in all provinces of Armenia.
- 2,389 Protection monitoring interviews were conducted. The questionnaire addressed individuals and their family members (totaling over 10,880 individuals). The interviews were conducted by phone and in-person in the communities, where there is a high concentration of people in a refugee-like situation. Case management began in August and 29 intervention plans were already initiated with people, and this exercise will continue.
- The number of key informants to be interviewed was expanded by interviewing not only community volunteers but also community leaders and service providers, by government and humanitarian agencies, to understand and triangulate the situation.
- In partnership with KASA Foundation UNHCR launched its new hotline on 13 August. A total of 89 unique calls were received and answered. The calls concerned documentation, health issues, and other services.
- UNICEF's project implementation for supporting education continuity as part of Japan Emergency Aid Funding continues and the upgrading of WASH facilities has been finished in almost 5 to 6 schools. Some furniture is also being provided. This project is being accompanied by some teachers training on remedial classes as children have missed some part of the academic curriculum during the frequent moves. It aims to capacitate teachers so that they can address the learning gap. This is being done in close coordination with Open Society Foundation which has developed a curriculum for 3rd and 6th grade on math and languages.
- Save the Children International finished its activities and from 6 August transferred them to local partners. The child-friendly spaces were established with the support of Save the Children International, and are maintained and supported through ECHO 2nd phase grant project partners of Save the Children: Mission Armenia and Partnership and Teaching NGO.
- In July to September, Mission Armenia (MA) achieved the following:
 - 60 children from NK in Ararat and Kotayk received school supply packages in close partnership with Save the Children International.
 - Psychological counselling was provided to 106 individuals in Gegharkunik province; 50 individuals underwent psychological needs assessment in Shirak province; and 70 individuals received psychological counselling and therapy in Shirak province.
 - Mission Armenia (MA) is engaged in a project related to pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of children under 2 years old. Under this, 32 training sessions were conducted in Ararat, Kotayk and Yerevan (61 women

participated in Ararat, 62 women in Kotayk and 90 women in Yerevan). This activity was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France in partnership with Action Against Hunger.

- Psychological support was provided in Shirak and Gegharkunik. Psychological needs assessment was done with 44 families, home visits and counseling were held. Approximately 148 individuals from 36 families came to the office and took part in group discussions.
- Another 11 families received psychological counseling and they were assisted via phone calls in Gegharkunik. In Gegharkunik 7 PoCs came to the office to seek support, 35 PoCs received psychological counseling via phone calls and 18 PoCs participated in different kind of group meetings, trainings. Other families received psychological counseling and psychotherapy courses in the framework of a project that just ended at the end of August named “Supporting urgent food security, nutrition, hygiene and health needs for spontaneous arrivals and vulnerable host communities in Armenia”. In the frame of this project 7 training sessions were held in 4 baby-friendly spaces located in Masis, Hrazdan, Nor-Nork and Avan.
- In total, 240 pregnant and lactating women were supported through psychosocial sessions. Ararat Centre gathered 48 women during face-to-face sessions and another 30 women during remote sessions, Kotayk Centre hosted 28 women on face-to-face sessions and 40 women on remote sessions in Yerevan, both centers in Nor-Nork and Avan together hosted 51 women to take part in face-to-face sessions, 43 women in remote sessions. The training activities are funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France having Action Against Hunger as a lead partner. Within the framework of the project in Yerevan, clothes and other parcels were delivered to 16 individuals, funded by Aznavour Foundation.
- In July to September, ARCS achieved the following:
 - The big component on child resilience building was started in July, and in August more than 1,700 children were included in this exercise by organizing different child resilience building events on community and Individual/family levels. This also covered six regions.
 - Psycho-social support activities were also conducted: group events for adults and individual talks for children to be able to identify some symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and to be able to refer them further. Several group events were conducted with participation of 126 people.
 - Resilience kits were distributed to children, which included support for them to go to school, in the form of backpacks, notebooks, etc.; and 60 children who were identified as most vulnerable received tablets for access to education to ensure their access to education, especially considering the unpredictable situation with Covid.
 - Another project was initiated on 7 September by ARCS, which also includes support to NK displaced people, by partner Armenian Caritas targeting people affected from COVID and people affected by the NK conflict. It includes also humanitarian support and livelihood support to people from NK, with the help of UNHCR some 100 families from NK will be supported with livelihood support, by identifying them through the protection monitoring or through the partners like United Social Services. This will allow them to become self-reliant further and not dependent from the rental or other supports from different organizations.
- 2,000 cases were reportedly managed by World Vision in July 2021. Individual case management is part of the individual protection assistance, and is the basis of evaluating and identifying the various needs of vulnerable individuals.
- REACH presented the key findings from the 2nd round of the multi-sector needs assessment conducted in Armenia. The key findings were concentrated on protection, education, movement dynamics and some cross-cutting issues. Surveys were conducted with 414 households in a refugee like situation and 249 hosting households across all regions of Armenia.

Remaining Gaps

- The departure monitoring has identified concerns in the way departures are organized, such as lack of boarding priority and due considerations for persons with specific needs, absence of safety and security measures (presence of the police and ambulance).
- Coordination of assistance at regional/local level is also a continuing challenge.
- With no structured state engagement, the sustainability of private assistance currently being provided by host communities is a challenge in the medium to longer term and a more systematized approach is required to sustain interest and ability to host displaced persons.
- Along with lack of clearly identified durable solutions, growing concerns are being reported by the people in a refugee-like situation, in particular those who arrived from regions recently handed over to Azerbaijan, about their status and rights in Armenia.

Recommended Action

- Continue protection and departures monitoring activities.
- In terms of durable solutions identification and response, continue to thoroughly monitor collective centre and self-referrals through the hotline and expand further, to hosting communities.
- Within the Accountability with the Affected Population framework, strengthen Communication with Communities and raise awareness on access to basic rights, available services, and assistance programs.



Shelter and NFI Working Group

Current Situation

Shelter and NFI Working Group members continued provision of assistance to the persons in refugee like situation on the territory of 8 provinces. UNHCR's decision to provide cash assistance, which started in July in cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross Society, along with the decision to provide rental subsidy support in partnership with Mission Armenia, was evidence-based, resulting from information received from protection monitoring activities that UNHCR has been doing consistently since November 2020.

Identified Priority Needs

The needs were identified by participating agencies through vulnerability assessment and interviews. The types of assistance described in this periodic input were provided by Mission Armenia NGO.

Achievements and Impact

- In July to September, ARCS achieved the following:
 - More than 1,886 POCs were supported through different projects; another distribution of 6,000 hygienic packages covered 11 provinces of Armenia.
 - Hygienic packages were distributed. The first phase has been completed and the second phase of the distribution is being implemented. The first phase was implemented in six regions of Armenia with 20% coverage of local population. 4,500 packages were distributed to the NK population in six regions, which were identified by Protection monitoring, by other means of identification and based on their vulnerability. During the second phase the 11 regions of Armenia are covered, and the amount of the packages is more than 6,000.
- UNHCR partner Mission Armenia has reported providing NFI assistance to 1,102 families or 6,205 persons. Out of this number 8 families or 24 individuals are from hosting community and the rest are persons in a refugee-like situation. Seventy cooking kits were distributed to 91 families (522 beneficiaries), 203 jerry cans to 94 families (556 persons), and 379 miscellaneous items (e.g. furniture items, refrigerators, gas stove and other equipment) were distributed to 917 families (5,127 persons). A total of 652 distributed items helped the mentioned persons to improve their living conditions.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) and MoLSA, provided 14,000 persons from NK with monthly financial assistance (68,000 AMD per family) and 655 families will be supported with a rental subsidy of the same amount. Post-distribution monitoring has already started, and 771 families participated in the survey, which showed that the money was spent on paying rents, utility bills, food and medicine. Specific findings included:
 - 84 participants reported a reduction in the quantity or quality of food eaten as a coping mechanism;
 - More than 90% reported less than half the basic needs were met thanks to the financial assistance received;
 - Food was listed by most participants (709) as what they spent financial assistance on, with rent also listed by nearly as many (704).
- 23 parcels of winter clothes were distributed among PoCs in Ararat, Kotayk, Yerevan, with the financial support of Aznavour Foundation
- 100 boxes of baby kits were distributed in Ararat, Kotayk and Yerevan with financial support of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ).
- Regarding the humanitarian assistance in the form of non-food, and basic commodities, Shirak and Gegharkunik regions were covered. The distribution was funded by The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and in total 7 ovens were distributed in Shirak region and 5 in Gegharkunik. The 36 kitchen sets were distributed in Shirak region for around 194 individuals; and 21 kitchen sets were distributed in Gegharkunik for 96 individuals.

- In July to September, International Organization for Migration achieved the following:
 - The project funded by Japan government has non-food items (NFI), and a construction component. NFI distribution has been finished; almost 4,000 hygiene kits were distributed to people from NK in the three provinces of Ararat, Armavir and Gegharkunik.
 - In Dzorak, six bathrooms and two floors are being renovated. Half of the work is already done and the second part of the work is currently being implemented (people are still living there during the construction).

Remaining Gaps

- The shelter needs for the groups of population that cannot return to their former places or residence remain acute and the constant attention is required to shelter needs and household items along with employment opportunities.

Recommended Action

- Advocacy to mobilise more resources for the shelter needs and for the provision of livelihoods opportunities and gradual shift from humanitarian to development assistance.



Cash Sub-Working Group

Current Situation

The reporting period saw the finalization of most GoA-led cash support initiatives, especially those focusing on social assistance for the refugee-like population and host family/entity support. The programmes that continue include cash for work programmes (public works and for gaining work experience), support to injured servicemen and families of missing persons. In September, additional programmes were announced, including support to servicemen injured (wounded) or having acquired a disability as a result of military hostilities, as well as support to housing for displaced persons from Qashatagh region in the form of repayment of mortgage principal and interest amounts. Finally, the GoA has been considering relaunching of social support cash assistance for displaced families with a focus on those who have lost property; however, the details of the programme are still under discussion.

The extension period saw the finalization of cash assistance programmes by various partners in line with GoA-led programmes, as well as re-orientation of activities and fundraising in line with the extended IARP. The Cash sWG has regular participation from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), the advisor to the Minister, and the Cash Focal Point, ensuring constant communication and feedback on various Government cash support programmes, as well as ways that partners can contribute to those programmes.

Identified Priority Needs

The second round of Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) findings from June 2021 suggest that shelter, cash, and food, are the main priority needs among households in a refugee-like situation, as their already limited resources were diminishing, their basic income security has been shattered, and they fear becoming a burden on their hosts. Thirty-one % of households in a refugee-like situation reported being dependent on aid or remittances. For the host community, these needs are relatively similar: cash and food. Host families have also mentioned cash as the primary need, considering the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with the arrival of the displaced population, placing an additional burden on host communities in terms of their capacity to address their needs, and maintain order and social cohesion. Debt load remains one of the factors that influences the ability of hosting households to host the refugee-like population, with 59% of the hosting households reported having debts. These findings are largely confirmed by cash post-distribution monitoring results by partners.

Considering that most social assistance-type Government-led cash programmes² ended in August 2021, there is a need to find sustainable solutions for those families, who are not able to return, thus gradually shifting towards early recovery. In discussion with MoLSA, the following needs were identified: 1) cash for shelter, including rental subsidies and host family/entity support; 2) voucher assistance for food, including development of a food voucher system linked to the national social protection system; 3) cash for work, including employment, income-generating activities, skills building and creating dignified income security; 4) cash for services, including increase in volume, quality or establishment of new

² Except for cash for work programmes (until December 2021) and host and legal entity support (until August 2021).

services in collaboration with NGOs; 5) cash for basic needs in the form of recurrent monthly support. The GoA is seeking support from partners for these identified priority needs in the form of financial and technical assistance.

Achievements and Impact

- Based on the rich experience acquired in the development and implementation of cash support programmes within the Cash sWG, draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for supporting Government-led cash programmes were drafted based on lessons learnt and best practices. The SOPs were also drafted based on the need to overcome some existing challenges, including data availability, fund blockage, etc., and they were shared with MoLSA and partners for feedback. These will complement the set of documents to support institutionalization of humanitarian cash programming within the GoA and the Cash sWG, along with the draft MoU, bank agreement, non-disclosure samples, and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) tools. Moreover, beneficiary data sharing mechanisms have been put in place and these were tested by the Cash sWG members in practice, including possibility for verification and PDM.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) and MoLSA, provided 14,000 persons from NK with monthly financial assistance (68,000 AMD per family. (See 'Shelter and NFI Working Group' section above, for further details.) ICRC, through ARCS, supported 1,609 host families (30,000 AMD per displaced adult) hosting 4,996 displaced persons in July 2021, which was followed by PDM of 160 families.
- The World Bank's grant agreement with GoA in support of four cash programmes through the Treasury system and jointly with MoLSA/USS has been effective since June 2021; however, in August 2021 the GoA requested reallocation of funds to increase financing of cash assistance to host families and decreasing that for the 68,000 AMD programme and cash for work. These changes are pending review and approval, upon which disbursement of funds will begin, conditional on verification of payments and compliance with the World Bank financial management and safeguards policies.
- ACTED, with ECHO funding, finalized the distribution of value-based vouchers to a total of 4,170 displaced persons (987 households) in Tavush, Lori, Shirak, Gegharkunik and Kotayk regions, thus also contributing to the establishment of a network of supermarkets in those areas. PDM is being finalized together with lessons learnt on rolling out voucher assistance.
- People in Need, with ECHO funding, implemented a cash-based utilities reimbursement/subsidy, reaching 4,341 families in July-August 2021.

Remaining Gaps

- As voiced by MoLSA, support of development partners in terms of financial and technical assistance is needed in the five priority areas – focusing on housing, food, income-generating activities, access to services and basic needs and livelihoods. More effort needs to be put in tying these programmes to sustainable early recovery efforts, including within the broader social protection and employment policies. Moreover, MoLSA asked for more coordination between partners, if they are covering portions of certain programmes, due to additional workload and pressure put on USS with regard to compiling and sharing of beneficiary lists.
- Continuous assurance is needed that the persons supported by the UN and other partners are indeed in the territory of Armenia, considering the jurisdiction of agencies is to assist persons in a refugee-like situation in Armenia. The Government is opened to dialogue and consultation and flexible to the extent possible in accommodating requests, including cross-checking of information and verification of beneficiaries as per the provided beneficiary lists. So far, verifications and PDM have shown a positive record of accuracy of Government-provided data, while any issues are immediately addressed by MoLSA/USS.
- Relatively limited scope of participation of group members and beneficiaries in the design of cash support programmes and determination of transfer modalities and values, including low take-up of some programmes, especially focusing on job creation. These require further analysis.

Recommended Action

- ⇒ Regular communication with MoLSA, MFA, the Deputy Prime Minister's (DPM) office, CSG and Cash sWG on next procedural steps, including removal of potential challenges for cash rollout and support in conclusion/extension of MoUs and agreements, including through development and finalization of standard operating procedures for cash support.

- ⇒ Request for more clarity from MoLSA and DPM's office on the number of individuals/households affected by NK conflict and in need of cash support, especially those who are currently in Armenia, including within the IARP extension period.
- ⇒ Continuously provide information to donors on the developed mechanism and approaches for multi-purpose cash interventions complementing Government-led initiatives.
- ⇒ Finalize formal Standard Operating Procedures for supporting Government-led cash support programmes as part of the Cash sWG, as per identified lessons learned and in collaboration with MoLSA, thus institutionalizing the mechanisms for future shocks and crises.



Food Security and Nutrition Working Group

Current Situation

Food Security and Nutrition Working Group members continue to support refugee-like populations, and food insecure Armenians with food assistance, nutrition support, and resilience-building activities across Armenia.

Identified Priority Needs

Planned activities fall under three outcome areas: Objective 1. Ensure and sustain the timely provision of life-saving food assistance for 27,200 persons from refugee-like populations and host community populations. Objective 2. Ensure adequate nutrition for at-risk groups, including pregnant women, breast-feeding mothers, and children, targeting 14,505 persons. Objective 3. Resilience is built among affected populations through enhancing access to livelihood support opportunities to 2,826 persons.

Achievements and Impact

- In July, WFP provided 853 households/ 2,073 individuals with in-kind assistance in Shirak region in collaboration with Mission Armenia. In the same period, Action Against Hunger supported 602 households with in-kind assistance in Kotayk, Yerevan and Ararat. In addition, 443 individuals, in particular caregivers of vulnerable infants and young children, received basic nutrition support including guidance on infant and young child feeding (IYCF), childcare practices, and psycho-social wellbeing in Yerevan, Kotayk, and Ararat.
- In August, Action Against Hunger, with support of their partner Mission Armenia, provided in kind food assistance to 677 households in Kotayk, Ararat, and Yerevan. Food packages were provided to households of individuals in refugee-like situations that allowed them to meet 50% of their food needs for a month. Alongside this, nutrition support was provided by Action Against Hunger and Mission Armenia to 540 individuals in Kotayk, Ararat, and Yerevan. UNICEF targeted a further 3,190 individuals with nutrition support in August in the provinces of Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Kotayk, Armavir, and Ararat. Services provide included child screening by mobile pediatric teams, and counseling/education sessions for parents/caregivers of young children, and for pregnant women. Following a needs assessment of the needs of individuals to maintain their means of food production, FAO designed a programme targeting households with support for livestock and poultry. Also in August, 278 households in Syunik and Gegharkunik received chicken feed. From August to September, chickens and coops were also distributed, and distribution will continue in October and in the coming months.
- In September, only one member was providing active support to those in need. UNICEF reached 2,650 individuals with nutrition support in the provinces of Armavir, Ararat, Kotayk, Vayots Dzor, and Syunik. Services provide included child screening by mobile pediatric teams, and counseling/education sessions for parents/caregivers of young children and for pregnant women.

Remaining Gaps

- Food Security and Nutrition Working Group members have not reached set targets in any of the priority activity areas and therefore gaps remain.

Recommended Action

- ⇒ Increased emphasis must be placed on fundraising and service delivery role out so that assistance can be provided.



Current Situation

The health needs of approximately 37,000 refugee-like individuals remain similar to those of the host population. Systematic gaps of Armenia's health system (weak gatekeeping mechanism of the Primary Health Care system, high out-of-pocket payments, low geographic access to primary and secondary health services in rural areas, and quality of care) are known stressors. Whilst the refugee-like population are eligible for equal health service access, based on the second round of the MSNA assessment, the refugee-like population are in much higher need of mental health and psycho-social support as compared to the hosting population. Over the past three months health partners have come through on their commitment to support the GoA and MoH with a variety of health-related activities, focusing on physical and mental health struggles encountered by individuals in need, as a consequence of or exacerbated by the conflict and the prevailing pandemic. One year since the escalation of the conflict, there is no humanitarian access for UN agencies to NK. Also the status, needs and epidemiological data on primary and secondary health care as well as the current COVID-19 situation remain obscured.

Identified Priority Needs

- MHPSS services
- Primary Health Care (including attention to COVID-19 including vaccination and infection prevention and control). Those two priorities identified by partners and the MoH are guiding the actors. Health partners are in the process of achieving the following: UNICEF will deliver on the results of their assessment for equipment donations to health facilities and will increase capacity building of health specialists in additional provinces/communities, whilst mobile pediatric teams will continue child screenings across the country.
- WHO translated the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) Intervention Guide for Mental Neurological and Substance-use Disorders in non-specialized Health Settings and is in the process of reviewing the Armenia version prior to publication.
- Premiere Urgence International calls on integration of MHPSS components into livelihood activities as a mainstream activity, and to support local/community structures in PSS integration in their activities. The organization continues its activities of capacity building, field supervision, and case discussion in cooperation with Santé Arménie to INTRA Mental Health Center and ARPA psychologists. PUI is currently preparing for a pilot ToT and supervision of adolescent resilience groups in partnership with PiN.
- IOM learned from its mobile health clinics visits in more than 100 communities of all ten provinces of Armenia that remote and rural communities continue to lack proper primary health facilities and necessary health personnel. Hence, improvement of health care facilities in Armenia remains a priority.
- ARCS continues provision of psychological support to the affected population through multiple activities ranging from hotline provision, Psychological First Aid, psychological support provision, trainings, and information sessions at the community level through the volunteer network.
- UNDP is working continuously on the expansion of its mobile laboratory and instrumental diagnostic and sampling service. Needs assessment and design for the mobile testing service in Berd and Sisian was finalized with procurement of equipment and capacity building training sessions in process. The agency highlights the challenge for the host and refugee-like population in remote and bordering communities and settlements affected by the double crisis, to access primary health care services. Distance, poor equipment and service provision, and non-affordable transportation are key hindrances. The recently conducted 2nd round of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) in Armenia showed that 48% of the refugee-like population in Syunik region needs polyclinical services and about 20 % of them were not able to receive this service in Syunik regions. Mobile Laboratory and Instrumental Diagnostic and Sampling Service can be a solution for the municipalities in Syunik region to ensure the refugee-like population fully enjoy their right to the access of primary health care services.
- As part of UNDP's post-conflict response package, in partnership with Homeland Defender, the agency supports capacity-building and upskilling of 30 mid-level medical personnel, including ergo-therapists, physiotherapists, and rehabilitation nurses to support the rehabilitation services.

- Médecins du Monde (MDM) will finalize a Domestic Violence prevention comic book and disseminate it amongst care providers.

Achievements and Impact

- IOM Armenia completed provision of primary health care services to the population displaced from NK within the framework of the CERF Project by the end of July. The Implementing partner, National Center for Infectious Diseases, implemented 188 visits to more than 100 communities of all the ten provinces of Armenia. From the beginning of the IARP, and as of end of July, the mobile health teams screened 9,985 individuals, 3,335 individuals were referred for specialized medical treatment, and 2,197 individuals received symptomatic treatment by the specialists of the mobile clinics. IOM's implementing partner INTRA Mental Health Centre has conducted psychological assessment of 502 individuals displaced from NK, providing psychological assistance to the displaced population.
- The Armenian Technical Reference Group for-MHPSS implemented a series of webinars, including a session on 'Identification of Warning Signs of Suicidal Behavior During a First Clinical Interview'.
- ARCS provided MHPSS support across Armenia including their hotline and provision of trainings and information sessions at community level, and worked with volunteers within the Health in Emergencies program on the topics of First Aid and Psychological First Aid, WASH, epidemic control and preparedness. As such, more than 4,000 people received Psychological and First Psychological support; 299 individual received PSS counseling sessions to children; group sessions targeted 287 individuals displaced from NK in six regions of Armenia; 5,500 calls were received via the hotline and individuals were provided with information and support, referrals and psychological support; and more than 18,000 people were covered by Health in Emergency activities, including people displaced from NK.
- In its support to the pandemic, ARCS distributed 10,000 medical masks and 1,000 hand sanitizer units to assure availability of PPE.
- MDM finalized its health and social care support through vouchers, referrals and counselling, as well as extensive MHPSS and GBV activities by the end of September.
- UNICEF, in close collaboration with the MoH, has implemented a multi-component set of interventions comprised of capacity building of frontline health specialists to respond effectively to the needs of children and women in a refugee-like situation. As such, UNICEF trained more than 600 frontline health specialists in five provinces on how to assess/monitor child nutrition, growth and development, and how to provide psycho-social support. In total, 5,500 children in a refugee-like situation and those living in host communities were screened comprehensively by mobile pediatric teams, including referrals for further assessment/treatment in case of a need; and more than 2,100 parents/caregivers and pregnant women participated in counselling/education sessions facilitated by national experts.
- UNDP in cooperation with the Yerevan State University's Center of Applied Psychology, Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre for Servicepersons and Victims of War completed 300 war veterans' psycho-social needs assessments. The centre is focusing on aiding war veterans and victims of war via combined work by psychologists and psychiatrists. So far, a total of 677 military personnel and war-affected people were included in the project and a total of 1,326 consultations/psychotherapeutic sessions were held with them.
- PUI facilitated 197 psychological sessions in July and conducted a training on working with trauma clinical techniques led by Santé Arménie. PUI finalized its MHPSS needs assessment, deepening knowledge on the various MHPSS needs at community level (Syunik and Gegharkunik) to develop new interventions in the coming months. The report will be shared with the HWG.

Remaining Gaps

- MHPSS needs in country, particularly for the refugee-like population, remain high. Also the stigmatization of MHPSS needs, care provision, and related services, the need to improve the accessibility of MHPSS services at community level especially for displaced populations, and the need to ensure gender- and age-specific approaches for supporting mental health wellbeing are developed and shared prevails.

Recommended Action

- ⇒ Over the coming months, health partners will predominantly focus on establishment and continuation of a broad variety of MHPSS services and primary health care provision across Armenia for local and displaced population of all ages as well as war veterans and victims of war. Among these are capacity building and training for specialized medical

professions, provision of essential equipment at health facilities, hotline provision, mobile clinic and laboratory consultations, and screenings for children and adults in remote and rural areas.

- ⇒ WHO, with the support of DG ECHO, will start the roll out of its mental health Gap Action Program programme by late October. Ensuring professional and systematic MHPSS at primary healthcare level – accessible to all the population across Armenia – will commence with a series of ToTs.
- ⇒ In response to the worrying COVID-19 situation, health partners uphold their commitment to the GoA by supporting with equipment, guidance, and mobile vaccination services.



Early Recovery Working Group

Current Situation

As per the updated IARP, the ER partners continued their support and interventions to help affected host communities and refugee-like populations staying in Armenia. In September 2021, People in Need started the implementation of the "REACT: Relief and Early Recovery for People Affected by Conflict, in Armenia" project funded by EU ECHO (in a consortium with ACTED, Armenian Association of Social Workers, and Mission Armenia). The project aims to support refugee-like families with utility subsidies and winterization support, and improve families' socio-economic integration by involving them into educational and vocational training. UNDP received funding from EU ECHO to implement "Our Lives: Our Future. Supporting Self-Recovery and Resilience of Conflict Affected Communities in Armenia" project over 16 months, covering 12 communities in Gegharkunik and Syunik provinces. It includes on-the-job trainings, upskilling and reskilling, cash and in-kind assistance, grants to agricultural and non-agricultural MSMEs and individuals, and provision of energy-efficient solutions for communities. UNDP also started a new project "Support to Post-Conflict Recovery of the most Vulnerable Communities in Armenia" (funded by the Russian Federation) with the geographic coverage of Syunik, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor provinces. The project supports the refugee-like population in addressing their needs in shelter, livelihood and income, jobs creation, including through emergency employment schemes (the latter is country-wide), support to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, as well as support to host communities to introduce energy efficient solutions. ILO focuses on supporting an integrated employment and social protection policy response to the impact of the double crises (NK and the pandemic). Improvement of the national policy framework has become a key direction of that response, such as support in finalization and implementation a new Employment Strategy, extending social protection coverage, analyzing social protection expenditure and identifying fiscal space for social protection, strengthening employment services, and promoting social dialogue. At a service delivery level, ILO re-directed some resources for capacity building of the Integrated Social Services tasked to provide specific services (e.g. employment) to the affected population. The capacity building benefitted about 162 participants. Host communities continue to experience a burden in terms of addressing energy needs while having limited capacity to utilize green energy solutions.

Identified Priority Needs

The priority needs in the ER sector remain broadly the same as reported in the last period. The increase in utility bills and limited income sources continue to be significant challenges to both the refugee-like and host populations. There is underutilized potential for energy savings in the communities that would reduce the economic burden and dependence on the national electrical grid. Subsidizing utility costs and winterization support will have to be prioritized again in the months ahead, which require an assessment of needs to identify the most vulnerable refugee-like population. From the perspective of employment services, there is a need to strengthen the employment policy framework and to improve sustainability of employment programs and services, which require dedicated capacity building measures for MoLSA Integrated Social Services. The recent Economic Resilience Assessment also indicates that these institutions face challenges in delivery of their services, such as insufficient resources, including human resources, gaps in skills and knowledge, governance and coordination gaps and inefficiencies. Overall, the Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment's (CVA) findings suggest that Armenian service infrastructure, despite having been challenged by the double shocks of 2020, has largely remained resilient. Host and refugee-like households commonly reported having experienced continued access to utilities and services throughout the double shocks. In the education sector, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the learning process of host households, while refugee-like households reported enrolment challenges upon their arrival to Armenia. In the healthcare sector, the double shock of COVID-19 pandemic and the hostilities in and around NK notably affected services across the three regions, with service providers reporting their main challenges being a lack of doctors and medical personnel. Furthermore, in the employment sector, both host and refugee-like households reported high unemployment rates among heads of households, and refugee-like households particularly reported that

their employment access was negatively impacted by the hostilities in and around NK. In the social cohesion dimension, for both the host households and refugee-like households, as well as the interviewed service providers, the need to enhance participatory planning and community engagement mechanisms emerged as a key finding in the CVA. Host households and refugee-like households in Syunik, Kotayk and Yerevan commonly reported feeling either “very concerned” or “relatively concerned” about their security situation, which suggests the need to support local communities in developing a sense of safety both on a household and community level. Key findings of the Economic Resilience Assessment confirm the challenges that both host and refugee-like population experience in covering their main livelihood needs and trying to find a balance between such needs as utility payments, food and clothes, healthcare, and education costs. It also identified that refugee-like population were more actively seeking jobs or income-generating activities than during the first months of displacement. Even though the participants from both population groups identified many similar challenges relating to the situation in the labour market and the general job prospects, there were some barriers which were specific to the refugee-like population such as discrimination based on belonging to the refugee-like population, bureaucratic barriers, and lack of clarity on the future.

Achievements and Impact

- Five ER partner organizations (UNDP, UNIDO, ILO, People in Need and UNICEF) reported on 12 activities from which, three were completed, and nine are ongoing. Activities covered 8 provinces (Ararat, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor) and Yerevan and varied across needs assessments, improvement of social infrastructure and services (photovoltaic grid station for solar street lighting, policy support, and capacity development of service providers (MoLSA, integrated social services), livelihood support (creating income generating opportunities, provision of food processing equipment) and veteran support (providing technical assistance to and capacity development for service providers).
- During the reporting period, more than 15,900 individuals were targeted, though the number of reached was relatively low – 32, indicating that many certain activities are yet to be finalized. When the UNDP-led energy efficiency measure is completed, all 15,900 individuals will have been reached. The majority of activities are wholly funded apart from two activities of ILO on policy support and capacity development of service providers. Specific activities are:
 - People in Need - Needs assessment of refugee-like families commenced to identify the most vulnerable families (beneficiaries) related to their needs for utilities and winterization, as priority assistance directions in the coming months.
 - UNIDO - Selected processors in Lori, Shirak and Tavush are completing construction of milk and fruit/vegetable processing facilities, which will provide income generation opportunities for refugee-like population. The selected processing equipment is provided by UNIDO.
 - ILO - A webinar "Progress of the reforms of Integrated Social Services in Armenia and the relevant ILO project Integrated policy response on employment and social protection in the context of COVID-19 crisis mitigation and recovery, supported by social dialogue" for relevant staff of MoLSA and Integrated Social Services was conducted which touched upon also the services being provided to the vulnerable population, including persons in a refugee-like situation. A virtual workshop was conducted for directors and head of departments of 49 territorial centres of ISS on the international experience in integration of employment and social protection services, included those being provided to the vulnerable groups of population. Three more webinars on International labour standards have been conducted for the staff of the MLSA and the Integrated Social Services. Total number of participants is 162.
 - UNDP continued its efforts for introduction of energy efficiency measures in Armenian communities. In particular, to decrease energy consumption and thus expenditures in Vardenis municipality, installation of 37 kW PV systems and upgrading streetlights to L.E.D. luminaires has been started (all 15,820 inhabitants benefitting from it, including 237 refugee-like individuals). The installation is currently under way, and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.
 - UNDP with the support of IMPACT Initiatives completed the Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment in Yerevan, Kotayk, and Syunik provinces, which were selected because of their considerable population of people in a refugee-like situation. It included a household survey (1,807 interviews, from which 1,202 host community households and 605 refugee-like households) and Key Informant Interviews (318 service providers). The CVA assessed the following 11 sectors: i) housing; ii) energy and utilities; iii) education; iv) healthcare; v) employment; vi) administrative services; vii) social services; viii) security and justice services; ix) emergency services; x)

environment; and xi) social cohesion. Key findings and the final report have been prepared for dissemination and for use in further consultations and ER planning.

Remaining Gaps

- There is a considerable need to continue supporting jobs creation at the community level to mitigate negative consequences of the double crises. More income generation and livelihood opportunities as well as longer term shelter solutions for the refugee-like population are needed. Measures such as the provision of immediate livelihoods can cushion the impact of crises and reduce vulnerabilities while long-term solutions to accommodation and shelter problems are developed.
- Communities have considerable potential of energy savings which remain unutilized.
- Continued capacity building to ensure that resulting policies contribute to improved access to employment and the establishment of universal social protection systems. The activities on needs assessment and career guidance and psycho-social support to returned servicemen and their inclusion in relevant labour market programs have been delayed. See section on “Identified Priority Needs” for more information.

Recommended Action

- ⇒ Continue to identify the most vulnerable refugee-like families as beneficiaries for utility subsidies and winterization support.
- ⇒ Continue support programs targeting engagement of the refugee-like population in economic activities, and strengthen their capacity for self-reliance.
- ⇒ Disseminate the results of the Capacity Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) to inform ER programming and interventions of ER partners. Design and implement ER and recovery interventions and support initiatives based on needs and vulnerabilities identified through the CVA. In particular:
 - a) Design livelihoods solutions for the displaced population in view of their existing skills and capacities. ER solutions must aim to benefit both host and refugee-like populations to avoid exacerbating tensions between the two groups. Tensions over job opportunities would be useful to target interventions that result in dividends for both refugee-like and host households and aim to improve social cohesion between the groups.
 - b) Support transfer to modern and greener agricultural practices (the predominant job type lost by refugee-like households) where employment would be more rewarding, especially for rural youth populations. However, medium-longer term livelihoods interventions should also focus on non-agricultural employment opportunities in higher paying sectors, with a focus on skills development.
 - c) Design specific measures to address needs and vulnerabilities in education and healthcare sectors affected by double shocks. d) In terms of social cohesion, ER measures should aim to enhance existing community engagement mechanisms for both host and refugee-like households while equally encouraging a gender/age-balanced approach.
- ⇒ Enhance collaboration for a government-led ER process e.g. development of a Mid-Term Recovery Plan, as well as between different implementing partners in the area of ER.
- ⇒ Continue capacity building for selected service providers (such as Integrated Social Services staff) which provide essential assistance to the refugee-like population.
- ⇒ Scale up energy efficiency solutions in communities, partnering with relevant stakeholders (e.g. co-financing through state subventions scheme) to ensure broader impact and expansion.
- ⇒ The movement dynamics of the refugee-like population have stabilized, implying growing needs and expectations for early recovery and development efforts and interventions by the ER partners, including livelihoods, institutional capacity building, public services, community resilience, and social cohesion. Supporting livelihood and income generating opportunities for refugee-like population.
- ⇒ There is a growing need for strengthening community resilience, social cohesion, and socio-economic integration. In terms of institutional capacity building, governmental and non-governmental entities and service providers need support to better address the needs of refugee-like populations and to provide targeted services for concerned people and institutions, such as MoLSA, integrated social services, employment service, and private sector organizations as employers of refugee-like people.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The UN team in Armenia established a coordination structure, which, at the technical level, is centred around four main humanitarian Working Groups (WG) – Shelter and NFIs, Protection, Food Security and Nutrition, and Health – as well as a fifth Working Group on Early Recovery allowing mainstreaming of longer-term initiatives to strengthen communities in Armenia. Additional Sub-Working Groups have been established such as Child Protection, Education, and Cash however after a review of the coordination structure only the Cash (Sub-WG of the Shelter/NFI remains). These technical Working Groups form the backbone of the coordination of the humanitarian response and serve to mobilize and strengthen coordination and collaboration among the different UN agencies, international organizations, local and international NGOs and the GoA, with the ultimate goal to ensure provision of most efficient, swift and cost-effective humanitarian response to challenges generated by the conflict in NK. To date, 13 UN agencies, 22 international NGOs, 19 national NGOs, 2 intergovernmental organisations, 5 Government entities, and 1 international organization are part of the coordination system.

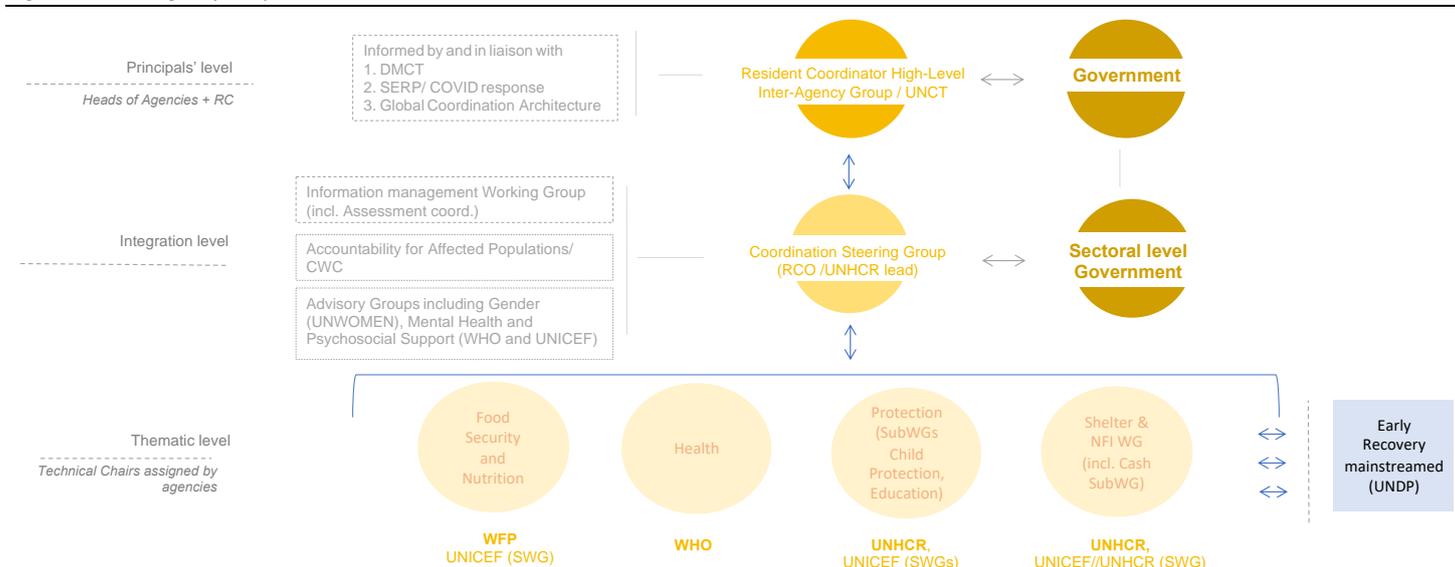
Inter-agency coordination is ensured by the Coordination Steering Group (CSG), which is comprised of chairs of the activated WGs and co-led by the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and UNHCR. The CSG is supported by an Information Management WG to ensure a harmonized approach among agencies and partners in collecting information on activities and to facilitate data and information gathering as well as dissemination. A Technical Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support ensures a coordinated and effective approach on MHPSS activities across WGs.

At the Principals level, the coordination structure brings together the Resident Coordinator and Heads of UN Agencies to ensure overall alignment and clear guidance of the humanitarian response. The coordination model has been communicated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as to all relevant stakeholders.

Given the fluidity of the crisis, the coordination modalities are reviewed continuously and adjusted according to the evolving situation on the ground, in full respect of globally established mandated roles and responsibilities.

It should be noticed as well since the election in Armenia and the establishment of a new government there has been a renew interest from the GoA to be part of WGs and the CSG. The GoA has provided a list of its representative that are or will take part within the WGs and the CSG.

Figure 3: Inter-Agency Response Plan Structure



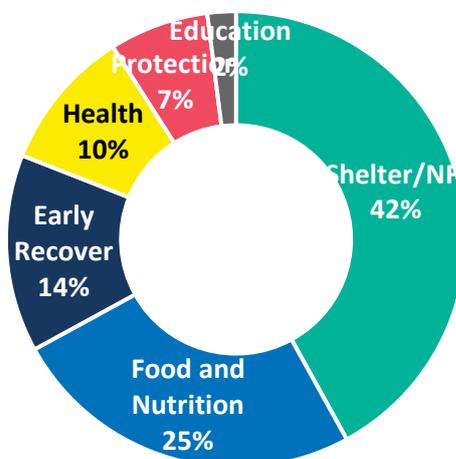
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Under the leadership of UNHCR and the Resident Coordinator Office in Armenia, the Inter-Agency Response Plan (IARP) 2020-2021 to address the broader humanitarian consequences of the NK crisis was finalized and launched at Yerevan level on 22 January 2021 (after its endorsement by the GoA on 20 January) covering the first 9 months of the response (until end of June 2021). This [country-specific plan](#), in agreement with the GoA, has now been extended until the end of 2021 and therefore now covers a period of 15 months (from October 2020 until end of December 2021), and therefore there has been a need for additional resources. The IARP serves as a coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization tool. It brings together 35 operational partners involved in the response (over 180 projects in total), **with total updated financial requirements now amounting to USD 49.3 M** for the overall period. The Response Plan includes not only humanitarian activities (under Protection, Health, Food Security and Nutrition, and Shelter/NFIs) but also early recovery, resilience, and durable solutions components. The plan includes part of the host community, in addition to the displaced population from in and around NK in Armenia and also factors in documents such as the UN Strategic Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) that strategically governs development initiatives of the UN in Armenia from 2012 to 2025 as well as other Crisis Response Plans such as the “COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan”³, which is already in place

The Coordination Team successfully applied for a Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) Rapid Response funding window. After extensive discussion with the CERF Secretariat, UNICEF, IOM, and UNHCR were awarded a total of **USD 2 M** in mid-January to cover lifesaving needs in three sectors (Protection, including child protection and education, Health and Shelter/NFI). It is to be noted that the amount requested constitutes around 4% of the overall financial requirements identified for all sectors, as per the Inter-Agency Response Plan.

The IARP originally requested USD 62.1 M, of which 48% was received by 30 September. As of 30 September, the current funding level for the Inter-Agency Response Plan 2020-2021 stands at **USD 29.5 M**, which is equivalent to approximately **60 percent** of the current budget adjustment requested under the revised IARP extension (USD 49.3 M). Contributions have been received from the USA, Japan, the European Union (including ECHO), and CERF.

Figure 4: Inter-Agency Response Plan Total Financial Requirements by sector



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³ <https://www.un.am/up/file/SERRP.pdf>