Cash for work
UNHCR perspective

Livelihoods and Inclusion Working Group meeting
28 March, 13:00

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Agenda

- Minimum Economic Recovery Standards
- UNHCR’s market systems approach model
- Inclusion challenges, barriers and risks
Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS)

What are the standards?
• Industry consensus on economic recovery for the humanitarian sector
• Accessible and adaptable solutions for multiple contexts
• Help disaster-affected populations gain fair access to viable economic opportunities and regain their livelihoods
• Market-based approaches for responding effectively are emphasized throughout
• Provide practical guidance

https://spherestandards.org/resources/minimum-economic-recovery-standards-mers-english/
The Six Categories of Standards – market systems approach

- Core Standards
  - Standard 1: Humanitarian efforts are coordinated to improve effectiveness
  - Standard 2: Staff have relevant skills
  - Standard 3: Do no harm
  - Standard 4: Intervention strategies for target populations are well defined

- Assessment and Analysis Standards

- Enterprise and Market Systems Development Standards

- Asset Distribution Standards

- Financial Services Standards

- Employment Standards
  - Standard 1: Decent employment is promoted
  - Standard 2: Interventions are labor market-based
  - Standard 3: Job sustainability is supported
MERS recommendations on Cash for work

- May be used in crisis environments to rebuild or protect community assets
- Enable temporary income while rebuilding infrastructure when jobs are scarce
- Aim should be for vulnerable groups to be reabsorbed in the market system
- Wages may not disturb the market system
- Close cooperation with authorities and market actors
Inclusive market systems approach
### Inclusion barriers, challenges and risks

- **Data from *Lives on hold #3: Intentions and perspectives of refugees from Ukraine***:
  - Only 17% of refugees from Ukraine employed
  - Informal work higher than formal 10% vs. 7%
  - Self-employment / Business owner: < 1%
  - Underemployed: 56%
  - Unemployed 25%
  - Full-time caregiver: 29%
  - Lack of decent work opportunities: 8%
- Skills mismatches depreciate existing capacities and limit refugees’ contributions
- Limited access to services (including compulsory education and social protection) requires holistic approaches
- Language training, upskilling and childcare required
- Systemic challenges – national systems require further strengthening
- Documentation and intentions (legal uncertainty for the private sector)
Always assume that SGBV is occurring. In emergencies, SGBV is exacerbated, with some groups that may be more vulnerable to harm than others.

Livelihoods interventions can facilitate recovery and enhance protection, yet new opportunities for women and girls can increase exposure to SGBV.

Livelihoods interventions must identify, mitigate and monitor risks of SGBV and coordinate with SGBV experts and Protection WG to design and implement programs that are safe, inclusive and do no harm.
THANK YOU