

Bi-Weekly National PWG Meeting Minutes

Theme: COVID-19

Time & Location: Tuesday, 5 May 2020 / WebEx

Chair: Lara Özügergin – Assistant Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)

Participants: AAR Japan, ASAM, Charity and Solidarity Foundation (SEVKAR), Concern Worldwide, DRC, Dünya Evimiz, Expertise France, GIZ, HRDF, IBC, ICMC, IFRC, IGAM, IOM, JCCP, Maya Foundation, MSYD, MSYDD, MUDEM, Multeci Destek Derneği, Nirengi Association, Positive Living Association, Save the Children, STL, TRC, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WALD, WATAN, WHH, WFP.

Donors: US Embassy, PRM

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Introduction and Updates
- II. MSYD Briefing on COVID-19 Services
- III. IGAM Briefing on Innovative Outreach Modalities
- IV. SET Briefing on Mapping of Ongoing and Planned Needs Assessments
- V. ASAM Briefing on Service Continuity through Public Institutions
- VI. AoB

Agenda Item #1: Introduction and Updates

- **Sector Survey to Compile Findings of Needs Assessments:** Organizations continue to share their needs assessment reports that are uploaded into UNHCR's data portal upon their confirmation. The sector survey to compile findings of needs assessments was launched. The objective of this initiative is to ensure that outcomes of organization specific assessments are shared at the IA level, based on a few key thematic areas. The tool will be used in the short term and is expected to provide a general understanding, based on evidence, with regards to the impact of COVID-19 on the protection space of refugees. No deadline to provide inputs, however the tool will be used until the comprehensive needs assessment tool is finalized and rolled-out. Organizations are encouraged to respond to the survey.
- **Development of Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) Tool:** As per request of sector members, the process to develop a common, harmonized inter-agency CAN tool was initiated. The tool is predominantly related to protection however in order to capture a holistic understanding of refugee needs, questions related to other sectors/thematic areas have also been incorporated. The tool builds on UNHCR and other partners' assessment tool. The tool is currently COVID-19 specific, but will be contextualized to become a general protection needs assessment tool for future reference and use. The process will ultimately serve to improve the current assessment capacity of the sector in the short and medium term. A pre-meeting and a technical meeting with a few partners was facilitated towards the development of the tool. The team will provide feedback by Friday May 8th, subsequent to which the first draft will be shared with protection sector members

and other sector coordinators for their review (with deadline on Friday, May 15th). Roll-out of the tool is expected to start on Monday, May 18th.

- **Action Point:** Protection coordinator to share brief note that outlines the rationale, objective, process, alternative levels of partner engagement and expected plan of action related to the CNA tool development process. Once partners receive the first draft of the tool, they will be requested to review and flag major issues as well as their organizations’ level of engagement in the process.
- **MoFLSS – NGO Permission Process:** A survey was administered in the protection sector in March to better understand the process and its potential implications, as well as to provide an evidence base for advocacy efforts. Upon finalization of the survey, UNHCR inter-agency unit undertook an analysis, including potential concerns and recommendations for way forward, based on which advocacy messages were prepared. Due to the current circumstances and the need to focus on COVID-19 response, the process has been delayed but internal discussions are currently taking place within UNHCR. Once internal consultations are finalized within UNHCR, IACU will suggest that the analysis and the advocacy messages be shared with PWG members, upon their request.
 - **Action Point:** As per request of sector members, protection coordinator to consult internally on sharing the IA analysis on the MoFLSS – NGO permission process and the advocacy messages, both of which were prepared based on the survey administered within the sector. Organizations are encouraged to reach out to the protection coordinator bilaterally in case any decisions have been reached regarding their application.
- **Next Bi-weekly PWG Meeting:** Based on discussions of previous PWG meeting, the need to have SGBV and CP focused meetings in the PWG is emphasized. To that end, the next national PWG meeting will be focused on SGBV, followed by CP for the next meeting. General outline of the SGBV meeting will include regional updates from SGBV coordinators on ongoing initiatives; remote case management and service provisions; impact of COVID-19 on SGBV; and, discussion on way forward. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 21st. Organizations are encouraged to reach out to protection and SGBV coordinators for suggestions towards agenda and discussions.
- **Other Announcements/Updates:**
 - UNHCR Istanbul continues to liaise with Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, as per their request for collaboration around identification and referral of vulnerable refugees towards inclusion in assistance and support processes.
 - Istanbul PDoFLSS and NGO coordination meeting to be organized soon.
 - WATAN confirmed that their project has been extended until end of July 2020.

Agenda Item #2: MYSD Briefing on COVID-19 Services

MSYD presentation is shared via email, highlights from the briefing are outlined as below:

- MSYD website has a new page regarding COVID-19 outbreak which was launched in different languages, including Turkish, Arabic and Farsi. This new page includes:



- Awareness raising materials and information provided through public institutions;
- Audio/visual materials;
- Daily updates on the COVID-19 situation.
- MSYD's call center that has been operational since 2018 is available in Turkish, Arabic, English and Farsi. Internal and external referrals to services including case management, SGBV, MHPSS are facilitated on a case-by-case basis.
- COVID-19 specific new activities include distribution of kits for newborns/infants, food support, NFI, iftar meals (to 1500 individuals per day). They are also planning to provide cash assistance to 3000 Afghan refugees soon.
- MSYD conducted a needs assessment with 260 individuals in April. Geographical coverage includes Istanbul and Ankara. The focus of the assessment was on the impact of COVID-19 on protection, community health, and mental health of individuals. A few key findings are as follows:
 - 40,77% agreed that they have been having difficulties in dealing with negative processes in general.
 - 46,92% strongly agreed that they feel socially isolated.
 - 48,46% strongly agreed that their concerns about the future have increased.
- MSYD needs assessment report will be uploaded into UNHCR's Data Portal.

Agenda Item #3: IGAM Briefing on Innovative Outreach Modalities

IGAM presentation is shared via email, highlights from the briefing are outlined as below:

- IGAM is supporting the I'MAPPY application which aims to ensure that refugees are able to locate institutions they want to reach to address their needs, and to facilitate adaptation of refugee youth in their countries of asylum, including Turkey. The application is utilized by 6 partners in 5 different countries, namely Turkey, Lithuania, Slovakia, Greece and Italy.
- I'MAPPY pins locations of NGOs, public institutions and associations/foundations that support minority groups and migrant workers through job placement, employer engagement and vocational language training, employability skills development. Services such as accommodation support, financial assistance, legal aid, food support and PSS are also included.
- I'MAPPY is available in the following languages: Italian, Slovak, Lithuanian, Greek, Arabic, Turkish and English. Farsi and Pashto will be included soon.

Agenda Item #4: SET Briefing on Mapping of Ongoing and Planned Needs Assessments

SET ISWG coordinators' presentation is shared via email, highlights from the briefing are outlined as below:

- Southeast Turkey Inter-Sector Working Group coordinator shared outcomes of the mapping of ongoing and planned needs assessments, which protection sector members recently contributed to. Accordingly:
 - 23 assessments have been conducted by 21 organizations (12 NGOs, 6 INGOs, 4 UN agencies). 12 assessments have been completed, 7 are ongoing, 4 are planned. Sectors

included in the mapping exercise are protection, basic needs, health, education and livelihoods. Methodologies across the assessments include 20 phone surveys (with existing beneficiaries), 3 phone surveys (via key informant interviews), 2 direct observations, 2 online surveys, and 2 with other methodologies.

- It is noted, however, that these surveys used different questionnaires, were carried out at different times and in different locations, and have different methodologies, samples and respondent profiles.
- Key thematic findings are summarized below:
 - Access to remote education services are limited due to lack of TV/internet, lack of information on how to access, and language barrier.
 - Up to 80% have lost their jobs due to lockdown restrictions. These result in adoption of various coping strategies including reducing food expenditure, borrowing money, spending savings and reducing non-essential expenditures.
 - Level of awareness on COVID-19 is quite good, but lower in rural areas. Awareness of who to contact/available services in case of infection is low. Refugees are reducing visits to hospitals due to a variety of reasons. Increased stress in households is noted.
 - Refugees have limited access to hygiene material and protective gear.
 - Information regarding COVID-19 is primarily received through social media, TV, and neighbors/friends.
 - Stated needs are summarized as employment; financial support for rent, food and utilities; education; PSS; health related information; protective gear and disinfectants; elderly, persons with disabilities and persons with chronic diseases are stronger affected.
- Recommendations for future surveys include harmonization of methodology and questionnaires; better identification of high-risk groups and their specific needs; more details on impact of reduced/remote protection services; repeated surveys to capture trends; provision of disaggregated information; and location comparison.

Agenda Item #5: ASAM Briefing on Service Continuity through Public Institutions

ASAM presentation is shared via email, highlights from the briefing are outlined as below:

- ASAM is currently operational in certain field offices where there are high number of persons with specific needs. These locations include Gaziantep, Izmir, Istanbul, Ankara, Adana, Mersin, Bursa, Hatay, Kayseri, Sanliurfa, Osmaniye and Sakarya.
- 11,000 calls have been received since the COVID-19 outbreak. ASAM's website provides COVID-19 related information in 3 languages.
- ASAM recently conducted a phone survey with 1130 individuals on basic needs, education and access to services through public institutions. Breakdown of interviewed individuals are as follows: 48% male, 52% female; 82% Syrian, 11% Afghan, 4% Iraqi, 2% Iranian and other nationalities.
- Key highlights from the assessment are as follows:



- 83% informed that they have enough information about how to prevent themselves from catching Covid-19. 65% stated that they receive information via social media. Less than 10% mentioned receiving information from MoH webpage.
- 58% informed that they rarely go out while 35% stated they stay home because they feel secure.
- 89% reported that they have stopped working due to the impact of Covid-19. 43% have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and among those who are working, 91% stated that they don't have work permit and earn less than they used to.
- 30% have problems accessing health services or procuring medication. 68% stated that they are not able to obtain their regular medication.
- 48% of the applicants who approached official institutions were able to receive services.
- 48% of the children cannot benefit from the distance education available via TV and internet.
- ASAM also undertook a mapping exercise on service continuity through public institutions, focusing on SSCs, PDMMs, SASFs and municipalities. The assessment was carried out in Marmara, Aegean, Southeast and Central Anatolia regions of Turkey. Key highlights are outlined below:
 - PDMM procedures have slowed down and only urgent/exceptional cases are processed.
 - SASF's continue to operate as usual but provide assistance mostly to Turkish citizens. In some provinces, ASAM offices share lists of refugees whom are highly vulnerable towards provision of assistance through SASFs.
 - The financial assistance (1000 TL) provided by the Government of Turkey to Turkish citizens for COVID-19 emergency also includes refugees, but the amount is 500 TL. Reportedly, assistance has been provided in Aksaray and Gaziantep.
 - SSCs continue to operate on a rotational basis. They receive information on individuals via e-Devlet and the 183 hotline.
 - Vefa social solidarity groups provide food assistance in certain areas.
 - SONIM continues to admit urgent cases but has a condition to provide medical report specifically on COVID-19.
 - Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality provides assistance to refugees through applications.
 - ASAM and Sisli Municipality will jointly be providing hygiene kits to LGBTI refugees in the coming days, in Istanbul.
- Comprehensive information on service providers per region/province are included in the Powerpoint.

AoB

- TRC offices in the Southeast are operational and provide financial assistance as well as food support to vulnerable individuals.
- WFP provided hygiene kits to be distributed in TACs.
- UNFPA informed that IP applicants received masks in Ankara. Dunya Evimiz organization also distributed masks to unregistered Afghan refugees in Ankara.

Action Points

- Protection coordinator to share brief note that outlines the rationale, objective, process, alternative levels of partner engagement and expected plan of action related to the CNA tool development process. Once partners receive the first draft of the tool, they will be requested to review and flag major issues as well as their organizations' level of engagement in the process.
- As per request of sector members, protection coordinator to consult internally on sharing the IA analysis on the MoFLSS – NGO permission process and the advocacy messages, both of which were prepared based on the survey administered within the sector. Organizations are encouraged to reach out to the protection coordinator bilaterally in case any decisions have been reached regarding their application.