



**Protection Working Group Meeting
Ankara
20 June 2017**

Participants: Expertise France, UNFPA, IOM, CARE, UNHCR, ABA RoLI, ASAM

Agenda Item 1: Review and Update on the last meeting minutes/Action Points

- A document has been prepared in order to identify some steps to be taken by protection partners in case of a potential closure of their protection program. It aims to provide some guidance for a responsible handing over/transfer of individual cases and to support an internal discussion around contingency planning. It doesn't supersede existing internal procedures put in place by each organization but it sheds some light on some key steps to have in mind. It has not been circulated among the protection sector partners yet, but it will be shared to receive feedback.
- Sector strategy document for protection has been shared in the last Syria Task Force meeting. An inter-sector document will be prepared using all sectors strategies and be presented to the Syria Response Group.
- The workshops on child labor are currently taking place in Gaziantep and Istanbul. A similar workshop took place in Ankara as well for sector coordinators and brought together humanitarian actors and employers' associations for a much needed dialogue and engagement.
- Comparison of the different refugee outreach models stands as an agenda item. UNFPA and ASAM's contributions are appreciated. CARE suggested to present the different models and to discuss advantages/constraints of the models.

Agenda Item 2: Update on Operational Space and Consequences

- This discussion continues to take place in different fora, including in the field-based PWGs. NGOs are mostly concerned about the immediate and operational issues. Partners have expressed serious concern about the impact on their Syrian staff. A guidance is expected for NGOs to decide on their future steps regarding their staff. The most basic guidance is to ensure Syrian staff are applying to Temporary Protection if it has not been done already.
- The necessity of to have native Arabic speakers to conduct protection work was highlighted again. Restrictions and quota on Syrian staff are aggravating the situation. Work and residence permit of existing Syrian staff are not being extended or are pending.
- Self-care guidance and support is also requested by NGOs.
- The NGO community asked for the circular regarding INGOs that OCHA and UNHCR are working on to be shared in order for them to be aware of the necessary steps to be taken in the process. It was noted that the NGO Platform has been involved in this process also so staff whose NGOs are part of the platform should ask for it. UNHCR will see whether it can be circulated more widely.
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- For longer term strategy, the sector should develop professional pathways similar to the ones put in place for Syrian medical staff to ensure Arabic-speaking social workers can be legally employ and can support State service provision. There should a fast-track and gradual type of approach especially to provide professional certification in social work, which doesn't exist in Syria.
- To bypass the 1 to 10 quota in place, NGOs can send their job descriptions with ISKUR (Turkish Employment Agency); if ISKUR has no one matching the profile in their database, the NGO can obtain a waiver for the specific project to be implemented, but the process can be long.
- The Department of Associations (DoA) under the Ministry of Interior asks all foreign Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) registered in Turkey to obtain a "cooperation permit" to enter into a partnership with national actors. Although this guideline has always been in effect, enforcement has been more systematic this year and has come through during audits. It can take several months to obtain this permit which creates additional delays.
- Regarding the situation of Syrian staff, UNHCR has been working on preventing their deportation. However, practices of the authorities are not consistent, which makes the predictability even harder. In the few cases UNHCR dealt with, the common issue amongst Syrian staff that was detained was the lack of work permit. Registering for TP is a first step. UNHCR can follow up on specific cases, as well as the Bar Associations. Refugee Rights Turkey is also following on cases.
- In case of closure of protection programs, the transfer of individual cases will be of great importance. Prioritization of the most urgent cases that need immediate action or follow-up is key. If a case is forwarded to another partner, the relevant information detailing the actions already taken to avoid duplication and further exposure of the individual should take place. Such points are detailed in the draft guidance for partners to review.
- A harmonized tool to assess risk would be useful so organizations can classify cases in a similar way, which would help in case of case transfer.
- UNFPA shared their experience when one of their partners closed recently: they managed to transfer the staff of the closed partner to ASAM with the caseload. By this means, the persons of concern did not face any difference.
- In order to standardize the case management process, different agencies can present their own case management policies to identify similarities and differences. By doing this, a standard mechanism/common core can be identified. The IPA task force in Gaziantep is creating a registry of all SOPs and is working on developing one common SOPs for organizations involved in IPA.
- Basic data sharing protocols are needed to facilitate the transfer of cases
- Gaps in the response can't be capture as well with Activity Info as with the 4W. Better analysis is needed.

Action points:

- Partners to provide comments on the draft guidance note regarding the closing of protection programs
- UNHCR to check whether the draft circular prepared jointly with OCHA to redefine the registration procedure for INGO can be shared
- UNHCR or another protection partner to propose a harmonized risk assessment tool
- UNHCR to provide a simple data sharing protocol



Agenda Item 3: Any Other Business

- A “soft” launch of the Services Advisory Platform is expected to take place in July; partners will be informed when the platform goes live.
- The UNHCR Guidance note on the disability health report has been translated into Turkish and Arabic. These versions can be found in the Dropbox and have been shared widely through different working groups.
- There will be a workshop in Gaziantep to discuss ideas about how to collectively support access to ESSN and how to better target individuals, especially those who don’t meet the ESSN criteria.
- Current Protection sector coordinator, Christine, is finishing her assignment in Turkey. Terra MacKinnon will be the reference point for the national PWG until a replacement arrives.

Next meeting: tbc

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