Protection WG Meeting Minutes

January 29 2025, 10:00-11:30

Location: Hybrid, MS Teams & UNHCR CO

Agenda

- Co-Chairs Update
- Workplan (WP) 2025 – Presentation of Samira Smairat, Inter-Agency Coordination Associate (UNHCR)
- Returns Update – Presentation of Mari Sveen, Senior Durable Solutions Officer (UNHCR)
- Partners update
- A.O.B

Agenda items	Discussion	Action points
Presentation of the Protection Working Group Work Plan (WP) for 2025	Presentation of the 2025 Workplan by UNHCR Inter-Agency team file to monitor, follow up and take timely decisions. The first point of the WP is referred to coordination: It is needed to strengthen the coordination to avoid overlapping and maximize efforts in delivering services. This section includes 5 activities (proposed activities and partners can provide inputs). PWG and all SWG under the umbrella of the PWG have monthly meetings. The second activity is the thematic mapping through Kobo that will be circulated to propose topics to be discussed. SWGs provide updates, as well as ISWG on returns. Interagency will share and post MoM and relevant information.	Revise the presented WP in light of members' comments during the meeting

	Area of Strategy and Planning: ToR for the PWG to be updated every year, including nomination of the chairs. Design of WP in agreement with partners. Update the referral pathways. Area of Monitoring and Reporting: report monthly activity info and JFT platforms (training sessions conducted on 14-15/01, make-up sessions conducted on 03/02). Mapping exercise through the 4W for 2025 is planned. Information will be collected as well on phasing out, project closing, etc. Area of Mapping and Analysis: we need to map reporting, assessments, findings and record progresses as we report to many platforms as 3RP and others. Use evidence-based data for planning new interventions and strengthen advocacy efforts. Assessment can be shared internally and in the Assessment and Learning Platform managed by UNHCR. Area of Advocacy and Resource Mobilization: Achievements and challenges can be shared ISWG monthly meeting; JOSH meetings. Engagement with government (govt co-chairing PWG is a big achievement to ensure localization and sustainability). In 2024, a donor mapping exercise was conducted and to be updated in 2025. Area of cross-cutting: GBV, Gender, Youth, Age and Disability. Ensure inclusion of all categories and ensure gender, disability, etc mainstreaming. Area of capacity building: it includes awareness sessions, workshops, ToT, etc (in 2024 all of this was conducted but we need to establish the plan of 2025). Area of visibility: It is important to reflect how our intervention contributed in improving refugees' wellbeing. **Co-chair comments:** If the returns continue in a significant way, we will call for a PWG workshop to understand how to engage and revise ToR and WP. For	

	capacity building, please feel to reach out to ask any sort of training you would like to have. Highlight the importance of reporting. **Comments from members:** regarding the engagement of the government, it is a very important point, but we need to encourage more members from different entities maybe by having meetings in Arabic. It is needed to have more round discussions about funds as still exist duplications. Think to have more consortia and avoid overlapping. Engage government in capacity building but also having exchange of information and knowledge sessions between government, NGOs and INGOs. It would be also useful to participate in regional/global meetings to have examples and best practices from other countries (IHF). All the suggestions for capacity building can be added in the Kobo mapping and the WP can be edited accordingly (Inter-Agency UNHCR). The return situation may require issuing guidance notes, like 2-pager annex to GBV, CP, other protection concerns SOPs to be considered during returns (UNFPA). SOPs drafted by UNHCR on how to handle GBV/CP cases at the border. It is still internal, but it will be shared once finalized along with FAQ on regular basis (UNHCR co-chair). Partners and UN to highlight the impact of reduction of funds through need assessments to allow us to advocate with donors (UNHCR Protection Irbid). Members to focus/support national organization on the policies/strategies they are using, some smaller organizations are not even using policies. Involve more communities and civil society in the protection response.	

	Azraq has a workplan for training targeting staff, volunteers and community in Azraq camp (UNHCR Azraq).	
Returns Update	UNHCR have always had a presence at the border with Syria to monitor movements. 8 of December the situation changed: Syrian refugees and non-refugees started to return. We are moving from self-organized returns to facilitating returns. UNHCR is not promoting returns and calling States not to forcibly return Syrians in the principle of non-refoulement. The volatile situation in Syria does not allow to talk about "cessation of refugee status". Facilitating returns mean to help refugees to be informed about the situation in Syria. In terms of trends of refugee returning, initially they were 400 refugees per day, then a peak of 800, now dropping to 500-600 individuals per day. UNHCR is trying to analyze the reasons behind the peak and decrease. UNHCR is receiving numbers from MoI (more than 93,000 Syrian returned, 24,000 are refugees registered with UNHCR). The current position of the GoJ is that no refugee should be forced to return. UNHCR continues to engage with relevant counterparts in the government (MoI, MoFA, UNHCR wants to start coordinating not only with 'traditional counterparts' but also MoH and others to take into consideration all sectorial elements of returns). MoI will set up a task force with UNHCR. In terms of partners, some are members of Jordan DSWG. UNHCR is trying to 're-launch' the work of this WG that meets on monthly basis. In January, a big meeting was held. Information sharing is pivotal but we seek for partners to be also more operative and UNHCR wants to map those partners engaged or with budget for returns. UNHCR is at the border 7 days per week with a team, we seek to have a multi-functional team to address also issues as CP, SGBV, etc.	UNHCR will continue sharing relevant updates about returns, relevant information and updated FAQs.

	UNHCR wants to understand thoughts, intentions, needs of refugees through FGDs (scaling up FGDs in different locations including camps), town-hall with refugee volunteers and community leaders. UNHCR is sharing and updating FAQs and Community Pulse on regular basis. UNHCR has an Help site in Arabic and FAQs are also there. UNHCR is conducting the 'Flash Regional Intention Survey' – Jan. 2025 reaching 3,500 refugees and 1,500 in Jordan (to be published soon) to respond to changing circumstances. For what concerns Jordan, the intention to return to Syria in the next 12 months increased from 1% to 40%. 60% are still very concerned about returns. Refugees are concerned about the future of humanitarian assistance in Jordan (health, education, etc). A dashboard will be also shared with relevant data. Transportation pilot project launched in January: refugees reported financial barriers and barriers in terms of transportation. UNHCR started a pilot of assisted transportation based on international standard and procedures for what concern safe returns. The procedure prior transportation is:look who called UNHCR help line to report financial challenges in return, expressed willingness of return, pre-screening and signing declaration of interest, checking voluntary decision. UNHCR is engaging with colleagues in Syria, we have community centers, and we try to share relevant information to refugees. At this stage, refugees leaving Jordan are not allowed to come back and UNHCR is informing them about this. UNHCR so far facilitated 2 buses (19 individuals and 43 individuals). The large majority is returning by their own initiative. UNHCR will have 6 buses per week, with luggage allowance of 50 kg per person. **NGOs express concern on UNHCR facilitating returns. What type of protection monitoring there is in Syria?**	

	UNHCR is informing and being realistic in the information and coordinating with UNHCR in Syria to support returnees. The Syrian Red Cross is receiving buses on the other side of the border. At interview stage, UNHCR Jordan ask to refugees if they want to share their data (where are they going to stay) to be able to follow up and monitor but some are reluctant to do that. UNHCR is not conducting household-to-household monitoring but more about monitoring the area, if people are staying there, and if not why. **Does UNHCR have any insight of what could prevent returns (debts, legal situation, etc)?** People are informed that they need to clear their debts with hospitals, landlord has filed in court, etc. This will be checked at the border and government will not allow to depart. UNHCR is present there to support refugees but they awareness is raised about this.	
Partners Updates	To be shared by email due to lack of available time.	Co-chairs to receive updates from partners.
AOB	None.	

Protection Working Group

PWG Meeting Attendance Sheet

September 18· 2024

Name	Organization	Position	Telephone	Email
Maymoon Al-Hami	NEF	B.D. specialist	0799377397	malhami@neareast.org
Nemir Al-Sharif	JRF	P. M		n.sharif@jrf.org.jo
GIULIA VIGGIANI	AVSI	CIVIL SERVICE		giulia.viggiani@avsi.org
JESSICA VERDELLI	AVSI	HEAD of PROGRAMS	0775449976	jessica.verdelli@avsi.org
MARIABEATRICE ASCENZI	TDH ITALY	PM	0781277075	pm.assistant.jordan@tdhitaly.org
Amal Dacar	CBM	Social Protection Officer	0792007155	Amal.Dacar@cbm.org
Zahra Damer	IRC	WPC-PM	0795752252	Zahra.Damer@rescue.org
ERMA MULABDIC	IOM	PROTECTION OFFICER	0790481105	emulabdic@iom.int
ZUZANA NOVOTNA'	UNHCR	UNV		novotna@unhcr.org
Samira Smaiati	UNHCR	IACU		Smaiats@unhcr.org
Naela Sarayreh	NCFA	Director	079010128	Naela@ncfa.org.jo
Tayba Sharif	UNHCR	SPO	0797260832	Sharif@UNHCR.org