Basic Needs Working Group

Ad-Hoc Meeting on Municipalities, Meeting Minutes

Date & Location	16 December 2020, Field & National Virtual Meeting
Chaired by	Ahmet Ünver (UNHCR)
Minutes Prepared by	Elif Eser Mooty (UNHCR) & Ahmet Ünver (UNHCR)

Participating Agencies

AAR Japan, ASAM, CARE, ECHO, GIZ, GOAL, IBC, IFRC, IGAM, Ihsan Relief and Development, IOM, Kırkayak Kültür, Relief International, SEVKAR, Support to Life, TIAFI, TRC, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WALD, WATAN Foundation, Welthungerhilfe, WFP, Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV)

Agenda

Session 1

1. Welcome & introductions
2. Purpose & scope of the meeting
3. Presentation: Mapping of Support to Municipalities (UNDP)
4. Review of Municipal Mechanisms for Planning and Collaboration (Yereliz)

Session 2

5. Group Discussions
    a) Provision of Infrastructure
    b) Provision of Basic Needs Items
    c) Provision of multi-sectoral services
    d) Coordination
6. Presentation of group discussion summaries

Action Points

1. BNWG to work with other relevant platforms to revive Mapping of 3RP Partners' Support to Municipalities
2. BNWG to share with STF, identified need for further inter-sectoral discussion of this topic

Documents

- Guidance videos for the CBI Mapping exercise are available in Turkish and in English and the survey link is here.
- The Inter-Agency Protection Sector Needs Assessment Analysis Round 2 Report and dataset – Sept. 2020
- WFP Market Bulletin Quarter 3/2020 Report

Welcome & introductions

- The ad-hoc BNWG meeting on assistance to municipalities is a joint field and national meeting, with participation of UN agencies, NGOs and donor agencies from eight cities around Turkey.
- A brief update has been provided on the mapping exercise for CBIs in Turkey. Data collection has started as of 4 December 2020 and is planned to end on 25 December 2020.

Purpose & scope of the meeting
• Partners in the refugee response support and collaborate with municipalities, due to the significant abilities and resources municipalities have to respond the various and changing needs, across sectors. Municipalities provide a wide range of services, have an impact on local development processes, and can create cost effective, sustainable and localised solutions for communities including refugees. Municipalities are facing increased demands for services, while funding remains limited. • Basic Needs work with municipalities is reflected in the sector appeal, with USD 96 million is allocated to 81 municipalities out of the USD 208 million total appeal in 2021. • Support to municipalities is a cross-cutting priority, inclusive of all sector interventions. Although the Basic Needs sector has the largest budget for municipalities, Protection and Livelihoods sectors have the largest cumulative coverage. • This ad-hoc meeting aims to bring relevant counterparts together in taking a critical look to the coordination and support needs for municipalities, within the 3RP response, including all sectors as well as 3RP and non-3RP partners working with municipalities. • The sector aims to revive the data collection towards support to municipalities, with agreement of partners.
Mapping of Support to Municipalities
• UNDP has delivered a presentation on the on the mapping exercise conducted on support provided to municipalities between 2014 and 2019. The online municipal dashboard detailing the outcomes of the mapping exercise has been shared and can be reached through here. • The mapping was carried out in realization that municipalities have become an increasingly critical stakeholder for delivery of services to refugees under the 3RP, as municipalities have been central to many 3RP interventions. A dedicated report was published under the 3RP on Strengthening Municipal Resilience, detailing the inter-sectoral infrastructure, capacity and financial support provided to expand services. The report is available through here. • Trends in support to municipalities demonstrate an increase in 2018, with the start of various multi-year programmes. Interventions with the highest budgetary value include waste management, infrastructure support, water and sewer, and social assistance. • Provision of equipment and infrastructure support in UNDP projects, is an entering point for providing further resilience support including introduction of new technologies as well as optimization of project management systems. • The support provided to municipalities is based on identified needs which are defined as increase of budget proportionally to share of refugees in local population, with the aim of extending municipal services to additional populations. The Union of Municipalities has calculated an additional need of USD 126/year/refugee. • International support to municipalities is also provided by non-3RP partners, including IFIs and development organizations. The total support to municipalities including 3RP and non-3RP partners surpasses USD 1.2 billion. • Support to refugee-hosting municipalities is an important strategic element of refugee interventions in Turkey, especially towards the localization of response. Support to municipalities remains critical towards coordination the general response in Turkey.

Review of Municipal Mechanisms for Planning and Collaboration

- Yereliz has provided a presentation on existing municipal mechanisms towards planning and collaboration. Yereliz has been established in 2017, with the aim of civilizing local government and localizing civil society. The presentation will be made available with the minutes.
- Urban areas are one of the first points of contact for displaced people, and a significant majority of refugees live in urban areas. In Istanbul, there is an estimated 1.6 million refugees, making it very difficult for the additional burden to be met by responders.
- The working principles and modalities of municipalities in Turkey have been shared with the participants, in line with the Law on Municipalities (no. 5393). Metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities provide urban services at different scales, with the contributions of municipal companies that provide more dedicated services such as electricity and water management.
- Municipalities provide mandatory services as well as discretional supportive services, depending on the needs. Therefore, municipalities can include any local issue in their agenda and search for dedicated funding. The centralized funding municipalities receive is calculated depending on the needs of Turkish citizens, which restricts their ability to provide specialized services for non-citizens. The lack of additional budget lines for migrants and refugees for municipalities, creates difficulties for service provision in cities that host a high number of refugees.
- Although the national laws including the LFIP open space for new tools for municipalities, it remains difficult to operationalize these tools as municipalities lack standardized service areas. DGMM's Harmonization Strategy Document and National Action Plan details the main areas of responsibility for municipalities in provision of services for migrants and refugees.
- Municipalities work with migrants and refugees on a daily basis and staff in the field are first-hand witnesses to evolving needs. There is a recognition that there is a need for coordination, however higher-level budgetary limitations make progress difficult. Social assistance schemes for refugees, for example, require greater funding, that municipalities can't cover from their own budgets.
- Yereliz advocates for the expansion of urban services to include migrants and refugees, especially through infrastructure support to ensure sustainable service provision for all beneficiaries.
- Municipalities should also receive support towards building more inclusive strategic plans. The development of these plans rarely include the perspectives of civil society working with migrants and refugees, and this remains an area for improvement. Mechanisms that are developed as part of these strategic plans should be introduced to migrant and refugee communities to ensure inclusion.
- The 11th National Development Plan is a very valuable document that reflects needs of municipalities, along with sustainable urban development and needs of refugees. Municipalities are obliged to make reference to the NDP in developing their strategic plans, which provides space for advocacy.
- Five-year municipal strategic plans are inclusive of monitoring and evaluation structures including performance programs and activity reports. The plans can be accessed online for all municipalities.
- The pandemic has caused a decrease in municipalities' income and budget. However, many municipalities have increased their service provision during this time, including refugees in their implementation.
- City councils provide an opportunity for inclusion of migrants and refugees into discussion mechanisms. Another great point of inclusion for migrants and refugees is voluntary participation in municipal services.

Discussion

- The Istanbul Field Unit has been working with municipalities for a long time. Colleagues from Istanbul FU have stated they hope the discussion will extend to other working groups in the future. Last year Istanbul FU has asked municipalities what they want to concentrate on in the coming period. Municipalities have stated that

they would like to focus on strengthened communication and participation of refugees, financial and infrastructure support, and strengthening relations with international organizations. Social cohesion, livelihoods and needs assessments are three other areas they would like to prioritize in the future. There is a lot of focus on infrastructure in discussions about municipalities, but it's also important to see how we can more towards strengthening the social infrastructure.

- Municipalities need to make decisions on a rights-basis, and for there should be policy development for this. This is especially important for migrants and refugees, who face not only the difficulties caused by long-term displacement, but also face the impacts of disasters such as the pandemic and earthquakes.

Group Discussions

In the second session, four separate group discussions have taken place around different thematic issues on assistance to municipalities, based on the following guiding questions:

Group 1: Provision of Infrastructure
Group 2: Provision of Basic Needs Items
Group 3: Provision of Multi-sectoral Services

Guiding Questions (1, 2, and 3):

I. How do we assess the need for support & how do we target municipalities?

II. What kind of collaboration modality is set?

III. What are the coordination needs and advocacy points?

Group 4: **Coordination**

Guiding Questions (4):

I. What can IA provide to enhance coordination of support to municipalities?

II. How can IA better liaise with national/regional/local coordination mechanisms?

Presentation of Group Discussions

Provision of Infrastructure

- Constant connection is essential to understand the needs and updated outputs in the field and on the side of municipalities. The needs are changeable; working with the technical teams is critical to consider their inputs in the needs assessments. It is important to consult with colleagues in the field offices.
- Projects should include every individual in the community and should not make a distinction. In this way, social cohesion is achieved in the community, having an indirect effect on social cohesion as well.
- To conduct effective and constant collaboration with municipalities; partners should receive requests from municipalities which they already have a connection and ongoing projects with, consider them, assess the needs and consult with staff in the field offices as they are in contact on the ground, and include the technical teams and take into account their suggestions.
- Coordination with District Municipalities is rather difficult and needs improvements.
- Modalities of collaboration include capacity building interventions by giving management training and designating technical consultants by working in the municipality, creating new projects with them and activities related to the facilities' management.

- Using the community-based approach by connecting with the community and including them in progress is an important way to understand and meet the community's needs.
- The communication established with municipalities must be documented with signed documents and official letters. Using legal procedures and documentation ensures the safety of both partners.
- Signing the Memorandum of Understanding on both sides and taking approval from councils located in municipalities is important.

Provision of Basic Needs Items

- The Material Tracking Tool created during the COVID-19 period has been a useful tool to identify needs of municipalities. However, needs identification is not limited to this and can be conducted through bilateral relationships established with municipalities or in the field. These allow for direct needs discussions. The needs can include hygiene kits, core relief items as well as technical support and strategy development support.
- The collaboration modalities include Memorandums of Understanding established with municipalities, covering the target groups and details on use of resources. MoUs don't include fund transfers. Another collaboration modality is through Rolling Work Plans – which include and enable fund transfers to municipalities.
- The coordination needs include challenges faced by partners pertaining to unfamiliarity with local NGOs and systems, which can be solved through settled coordination mechanisms that include these local actors. Advocacy can include increasing information sharing and transfer of knowledge from and to municipalities. Increasing awareness on coping mechanisms is also important to consider as part of advocacy efforts.

Provision of Multi-Sectoral Services

- The lack of data and evidence on the district level pertaining to refugees themselves and municipalities continues to be a challenge. However, the progressive outlook of the municipality and their willingness to work on refugee issues are defining criteria in identifying needs in the current context. The ownership of their role in the refugee response and the capacity that municipalities have to respond to identified needs are important determinants.
- Needs assessments can include capacity assessment of municipalities, in light of guidance from specialized local NGOs. It is important to know if municipalities have dedicated teams working on migration and refugees.
- Collaboration modalities include direct partnership, where community centers are jointly-administered; receiving support from municipalities in visibility and project design processes; jointly working in the field in distribution of basic needs items; provision of human resources and logistical support; and internally supporting capacities through establishing protection desks.
- Basic orientation trainings provided to municipality staff along with human resources provision has been a suitable entry point for collaboration. Bilateral relationships to ensure efficiency of referrals are helpful. In addition, awareness-raising sessions on human rights, discrimination and refugees provided to staff increase collaboration.

Coordination

- Inter-Agency Platforms should be used for sharing good practices, knowledge and information on municipalities.
- Platforms should be expanded by engaging municipalities in sector groups or establishing new working groups or core groups at the regional or provincial levels. Inter-Agency platforms can help bring the Union of Municipalities or individual municipalities into the discussion.

• It is important to include municipal staff within coordination mechanisms, while ensuring the right focal persons are selected for each sector. • The needs in areas where coordination mechanisms do not exist should be mapped. • While trying to facilitate access to municipalities, municipalities' expectations should be considered.	
Next meeting	The next regular meeting will be held early 2021