



Basic Assistance Working Group Meeting: April 2021- Minutes of Meeting			
Date	28/4/2022	Time	10:00am
Facilitators	Ruba Cheaib	Duration	2 hours
Minutes Prepared by	Ruba Cheaib		
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sector updates March Assistance + Overall Coverage Socio-economic indicators SMEB and Transfer Values 2. WFP Situational Analysis 3. Presentation from UNHCR on Baseline Survey results 4. Q1 Challenges and Q2 Priorities 		
Agencies represented	<p>ACTED; Action Against Hunger; Al Majmoua; Al Ghina Association; Arcenciel; Cash and Learning Partnership Network; Cash Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Organizational Network (CAMEALEON); CARE; Caritas Austria; Caritas Lebanon; Caritas Switzerland; ECHO; FCDO Lebanon; Hilfswerk; International Committee of the Red Cross(ICRC); International Organization for Migration (IOM); LCRP Coordination Unit; Lebreliief; The Lebanese University Task Force; Magna; MERATH; Medair; Movement for Peace – MPDL; Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA); Norwegian Refugee Council; Oxfam GB; PARCIC; Premiere Urgence Internationale; Save the Children (SCI); SDC; Secours Islamique France (SIF); Soutien Belge Overseas (SBO); Swiss Cooperation Office (SDC); UNFPA; UNHCR; UNRWA; UNICEF; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; UNRWA; WeWorld-GVC; WFP; World Vision Lebanon (WVL)</p>		

1. Sector Updates (presented by Ruba Cheaib)

a. Assistance- March 2022- (coming from Activity Info Reporting)

- In March 2022, a little under 200, 000 households received multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), 160,000 were Syrian households, 40,000 Lebanese households (majority of which, around 36,000 households were assisted through the National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP)). MPCA to Palestine refugees from Syria has been suspended due to unavailability of funds.
- Around 125,000 households received child specific social assistance mainly through UNICEF's Haddi program and Save the Children (SCI). This includes 68,500 Syrian, 45,000 Lebanese, 11,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and 1,100 Palestine refugees from Syria.
- Total USD value disbursed in regular assistance (MPCA and child specific grants) in March was almost \$8.4M. The majority of MPCA is being disbursed in LBP while most child specific grants are being disbursed in USD.
- Throughout March, a small amount of seasonal cash assistance continued to be disbursed.



This should be the last month of seasonal cash disbursements. In March, around 6,000 households received seasonal grants, the majority of which was for Lebanese. Total USD disbursed in seasonal assistance in February was almost \$822,000

- Details on monthly reporting from Activity info can be found on the BA online dashboard here: <https://ialebanon.unhcr.org/BADashboard>
- Expected coverage of MPCA to Displaced Syrians: Figures presented here represent the targets for respective agencies and thus may differ from the monthly figures reported on Activity Info which reflect the number of families that received a cash payment that month. Of those living in extreme poverty (264,000), 256,000 (97%) are assisted with either food assistance (cash for food or food e-card) or MPCA or both. Around 176,900 households are targeted for MPCA- 67% of the Sector target. This includes families recently include in WFP and UNHCR programs through the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). Around 87,000 families living under the SMEB and not receiving MPCA (33% gap). This figures have remained stable over the past few months, with no major expansions or reductions.
- Preliminary analysis of cash assistance overlaps for Syrians: A preliminary analysis was conducted, using data from RAIS, to better understand different profiles of households that receive different types and different combinations of cash-based assistance. The initial analysis looked at families that received MPCA throughout the first quarter of 2022 (at least one payment during Jan-Mar 2022). Around 173,000 families received at least one payment of MPCA in Q1. Of those, 116,000 received MPCA and food assistance, 31,000 received MPCA and child focused grants, 20,000 received MPCA, child focused grants and food assistance and 8,000 received MPCA and either protection, emergency, or rental cash. The last group is likely underreported due to gaps in RAIS reporting. Within these groups, basic profile prevalence was analyzed including female headed households, presence of an elderly, elderly headed households, and presence of a specific need (disability or medical condition). *Refer to presentation slides for detailed figures.* The largest profiles noted (most common) are female headed households and having a member with a specific need. Largest variation among the groups is noted in the proportion of families with a person with a specific need. Partners voiced that it would be useful to look at the percentage of coverage through cash programs within each profile as well as to have regional breakdowns- additional analysis to be conducted.
- Coverage of assistance to Lebanese: Around 77,000 households were assisted under the Sector in the first quarter of 2022, including Haddi, NPTP and NGO support, noting that there is overlap between these different programs. The target for Lebanese is based on planned interventions under the Sector in 2022, and not a needs-based target.

b. Socio-economic Indicators:

- Consumer Price Index (CPI): The March CPI saw an 6% increase since February 2021. The March CPI recorded an annual increase of 208%, compared to March 2021. *Refer to presentation slides for more details on monthly changes on sub-categories.*
- Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB): The SMEB, from February to March, recorded an 8% increase and stands at around 5,500,000 LBP per month (estimated for a family of five). The food basket recorded a 8% increase and the non-food components increased by 6%. Since March 2021, the SMEB has increased by 205%.
- Transfer Value for MPCA: Based on the prices in March, the recommended transfer value for multi-purpose cash to cover non-food needs is around 2,000,000 LBP per family per month (equates to \$87 based on most recent informal exchange rates). The transfer value being disbursed by UNHCR and WFP has been increased to 1,000,000LBP from 800,000 LBP

for MPCA and 500,000LBP per person for food, covering only 50% of the recommended value for non-food needs. The Majority of NGOs providing MPCA are doing so in USD and the values is between 50 to 100 USD. The main concern of increasing values concerns social stability and social cohesion. For NGOs that provide is USD, programmatic and funding restrictions may prevent further increased in the transfer values down the line.

2. WFP Situational Analysis (presented by Abdallah Souhani, WFP)

- Latest updates from Port of Beirut website: The declining trend in the weight of unloaded food continues with a 21% decrease when comparing the first quarter of 2022 with 2021, a 29% decrease compared to 2020 and a 36% decrease compared to 2019. A 59% decrease is noted for live animals, 40% decrease in fats and oils and 26% decrease in cereals.
- Food availability in WFP contracted shops: Food stock availability dropped slightly by the end of March 2022 with 78% of shops reporting having more than two weeks of stock coverage (81% in Feb) and 33% of shops reported disruptions in orders in March (3% in Feb). This is linked to suppliers limiting distribution of key commodities related to the Ukraine situation. With regards to electricity shortages, 52% of shops reported full outages from both Électricité Du Liban (EDL) and private generators (similar to previous months). However, 95% of shops had contingency measures and continued to be able to operate. Scarcity in certain products was reported by 35-37% of shops (12% in Feb). 68% reported that suppliers were delivering full qualities of orders (compared to 94% in Feb).
- Demand: Exchange rates: Further depreciation of the LBP despite the renewal Circular 161 till May. Initially, convergence between the Sayrafa rate and market rate was noted. However, depreciation across both rates is noted and a gap between the rates has grown again.
- Food SMEB: By March, a 9% increase in the food SMEB is noted registering at 620,000LBP per person; a 1,062% increase since October 2019.
- Non-Food SMEB: Similarly, a 10% decrease is noted in the non-food SMEB in March.
- Weekly costs-preliminary data. Since the start of the situation in Ukraine, prices of the food and non-food SMEB have been increasing. By the week of April 18th the cost of the food basket registered at 700,000LBP and the non-food SMEB registered at 1,250,000LBP
- Prices of Combustible fuel: Since the start of March prices for gasoline have increased by 32%, diesel by 72% and cooking gas by 29%.
- Discussion: Impact of the situation in Ukraine on the BA Sector is mainly linked to the increases in prices (already evident in data and analysis). This is an exacerbation to main challenge we already face, in addition to potential knock-off effects of the impact on the Food Security and Agriculture Sector. The Sector needs to do more to address this, given the expectation that prices will continue to increase and transfer values may not keep up. A detailed discussion will take place within the Core Group at the next meeting. Need to contact Cash Task Force to better understand the work that would be done within that group in this regard. Caritas Austria has developed a short advocacy paper on the impact of the Ukraine crisis in the MENA region. The Cash and Learning Partnership (CaLP) has set up an ad-hoc technical group to discuss the impact of the situation in Ukraine on cash and voucher assistance specifically in MENA region. At the Inter-Sector level, there have been efforts to integrate impacts of this situation within the LCRP Business Continuity Plan.

3. Presentation from UNHCR MCAP 2021-2022 Baseline Results (presented by Sarah Osmane, UNHCR)

- Introduction: The purpose is to compare outcomes with outcome monitoring results (May 2022 and September 2022) and identify what is being contributed to the lives of beneficiaries. Data collection took place in December 2021 for beneficiaries in the new cycle of UNHCRs multi-purpose cash assistance program (MCAP) which began in November 2021.
- Methodology: Simple Random Tandom of 480 households. 31% were newly included households (did not receive assistance from UNCHR and WFP) in the previous cycle and 69% were continuing beneficiaries. 65% of the sample were receiving MCAP from UNHCR and cash for food (CFF) from



WFP and 35% were receiving MCAP only.

- Respondent characteristics: 80% of respondents were the head of household while the remaining were mainly spouses. In 40% of the sample, the respondent was female, and 22% were females headed households. Sample was divided across the different regions.
- Shelter and WASH: Most families are renting shelters and 25% reported that rent has increased in the last month. Most families had enough access to water and latrines. Only 14% of families had enough of all basic items (blankets, mattresses, winter clothes, heater, and stoves)
- Access to services: 65% of households were able to cover health costs; 75% of individuals did not have legal residency and 42% of children were enrolled in some type of schooling.
- Income and expenditure: Top 3 income sources: cash through ATMs, income from work, and credit/debt. Top 3 expenditures: Food, rent and health. Average income recorded at 1,100,000LBP per month and average expenditure was over 3,000,000LBP per family per month with 76% spending below the SMEB.
- Debt: 83% of household have unpaid debt with the highest in the Bekaa. For families with debt, average debt was above 3,000,000LBP per family.
- Meeting needs: Only 5% were able to meet all their needs with common unmet need being food, unpaid debts, and health costs.
- Food Security: About 64% of households had acceptable food consumption score and 10% had poor scores. Consumption of meats and fruits and vegetables were low. On average, households rely 6 days a week on less expensive food.
- Coping strategies: Most (91%) resort to at least one coping strategies. By types, 85% of household are resorting to stress coping strategies, 80% to crisis and 6% to emergency coping strategies.
- Well-being: No families reported that the standard of living in getting better, 12% reported it to be the same and 88% reported it to be getting worse. Majority of families mostly and always worry about money.
- Comparison across groups: The comparison is only indicative and not representative. Higher proportion of MMCAP+CFF group are spending below SMEB and have more debt, with lower food consumption score. The MCAP only group tends to have higher average income. Through income and debt, the MCAP+CFF group covers 30% of the SMEB while this is 47% for the MCAP only group. The MCAP+CFF group appear more vulnerable, proving evidence to provide these families with more assistance. Accounting for all income (work, debt, and assistance) the MCAP+CFF can cover 78% of the SMEB, on average. This amounts to 67% of the MCAP only group. Higher percentage of continuing households were able to meet there needs, as compared to the newly included.
- Recommendation: Living conditions will be monitored through outcome monitoring. Transfer values should be increased to meet needs along with diversified assistance packages.
- Discussion: Calculation of transfer values still rely on VASyR 2021 income estimations, it is worth exploring how to use data from monitoring assessments can be used.

4. Q1 Challenges and Q2 Priorities (presented by Ruba Cheaib):

- Q1 Challenges: Lack of Harmonization of Transfer Values, mainly for MPCA linked to the rise in prices. Large discrepancy between assistance being provided in USD versus LBP. Lacking a solid database and system for deduplication and crosschecking assistance to Lebanese. Funding for PRS limited.
- Q2 Priorities: Can be found on the Sector Annual workplan available on the Sector Webpage. Strengthen processes and information management linked to assistance to vulnerable Lebanese including defining process to ensure minimum duplication of assistance. This wouldn't include developing a full database but could be linked to ensuring a clear mapping to highlight areas with high risk of overlap. Annual review of the SMEB: bulk of the work happens in Q3, but initial discussions will take place in Q2. Develop guidance for In-kind assistance. SGBV, Protection and Gender: Defining priority risks and mitigation measures to work on based on the Protection Risk Assessment. Gender training is planned to held towards the end of May 2022 for Sector partners.