Coordination and Leadership workshop for field coordinators

Workshop Report

Inter-Sector Working Group
Jordan

1. Background and Objectives

The Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG) conducted a training on leadership and coordination for field coordinators (in camps and urban areas) involved in the Syria Response in Jordan. The wor-kshop aimed to enhance the capacity of field coordinators to effectively lead and coordinate their respective sectors, improve camp coordination, and contribute to a more cohesive and impactful Syria Response in Jordan. The workshops focused on three key objectives: strengthening skills in effective coordination and leadership; enhancing cross-sector collaboration between national and field levels and facilitating improved coordination of refugee response efforts to ensure align-ment with broader humanitarian and development objectives in Jordan.

2. Participants

Eighteen participants from various organizations, including UNHCR, CARE, IMC, JOHUD, Noor Al Hussein Foundation, and the Lutheran World Forum, attended the workshop. Held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Amman on September 1, 2024, the event drew field and camp coordinators from Zaatari and Azraq, as well as sector leads and co-leads from Health, Shelter, Protection, and Eco-nomic Empowerment sectors, ensuring comprehensive representation of key players in the Syria Response.

3. Sessions

Facilitated by the Inter-Agency Coordination Unit team, including Saud Al-Sakr, Samira Smairat, and Ehab Haddad, the workshop featured a blend of interactive presentations, group activities, plenary discussions, and focused sessions. This dynamic and engaging environment fostered ef-fective knowledge sharing. Details of the workshop agenda are provided in Annex 1.

4. Key Outcomes

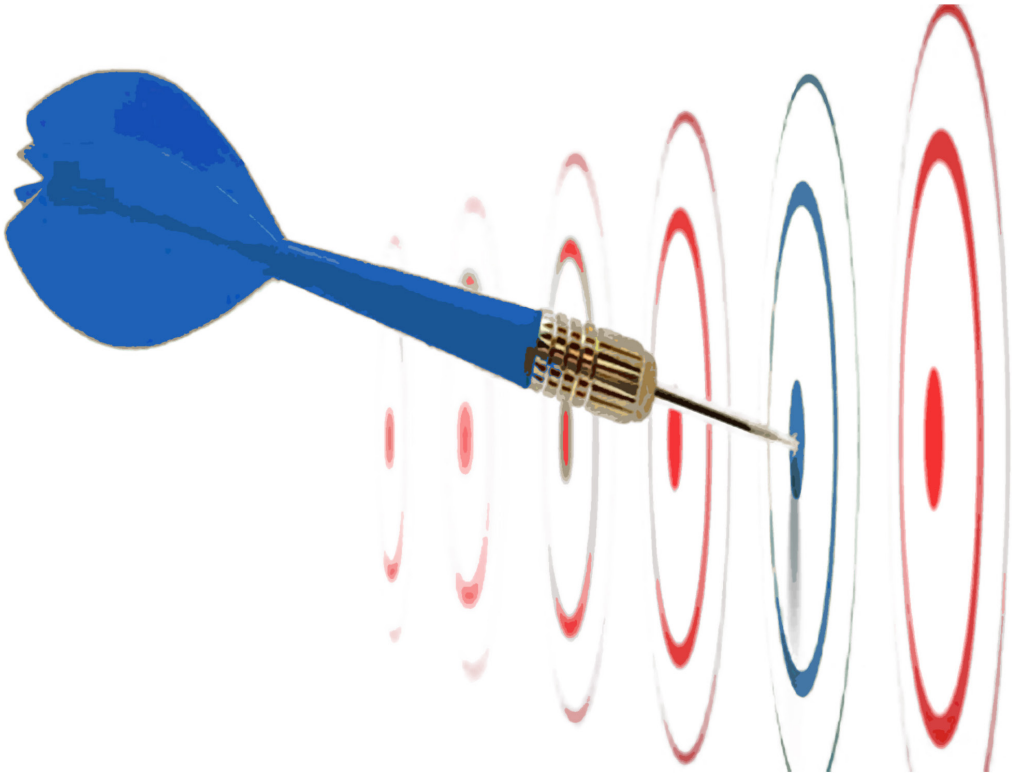
Enhanced Collaboration and Coordination: The workshop emphasized the need for stronger inter-sector and inter-agency collaboration at both field and national levels to improve the overall refugee response. This includes better integration between field operations and Amman-based coordination mechanisms to foster a more cohesive and effective response strategy.

Strengthened Leadership Skills: The session enabled participants to examine various leadership styles and their applicability in enhancing sectoral coordination. Key attributes such as vision, clarity, adaptability, and accountability were emphasized as essential for fostering effective leadership.

Increased Government Engagement: The discussions highlighted the critical need for more substantial government involvement in field-level coordination and inter-sector activities. There was a strong advocacy for integrating refugee needs into national policies and ensuring proactive government participation in both planning and implementation processes.

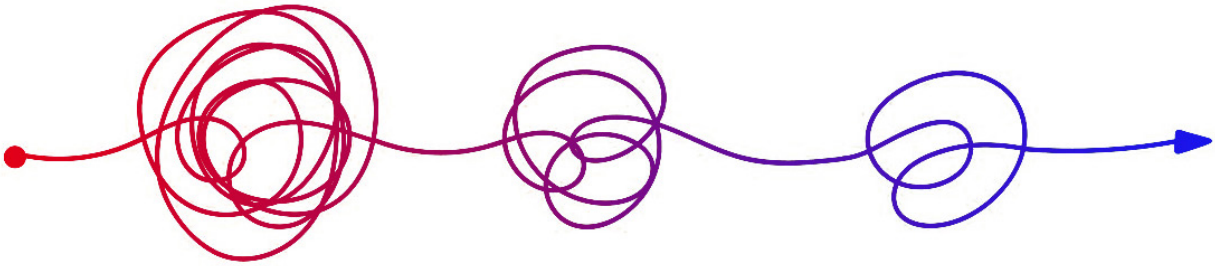
Localization of Efforts: During the discussions, field coordinators emphasized the critical need to amplify localization efforts. This approach entails a more comprehensive inclusion of local stakeholders, integration of refugee needs into national policies, and ensuring active involvement from government entities throughout the planning and implementation phases.

Transformed Coordination Structures and Meeting Modalities: Recommendations were advanced to enhance coordination by revitalizing the roles, tasks, and meeting structures across various sectors. This transformation involves clearly defining roles, merging similar working groups where practical, and reinvigorating meeting formats to be more strategic, dynamic and interactive. Such enhancements are designed to boost participation and lead to more effective outcomes.



Session 1: Streamlining Coordination

The session offered a detailed review of the current refugee coordination model, centering on the Jordan Refugee Response Plan (JRP) and its crucial role in managing the refugee crisis. UNHCR was highlighted as a key stakeholder, with the Jordan Strategic Humanitarian Committee (JoSH) steering strategic directions and the Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG) serving as the technical backbone. Sector co-leads actively participated in collaborative planning to ensure seamless co-ordination across various humanitarian efforts. Additionally, the session shed light on the newly reconstituted Jordan Development Partner Group (JDPG), led by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and co-led by USAID and the World Bank. This group primarily oversees development-oriented activities within Jordan. Current discussions among these entities aim to strengthen the connections between humanitarian and development frameworks, thereby enhancing synergy and bridging existing operational gaps.



Summary of the main points from the field coordination structures-groups' discussions:

- **Tailored Coordination Structures:** There is a need for coordination structures that are specifically tailored to the unique reality of each camp. This ensures that operations adapt to local realities and address new challenges effectively.

- **Importance of Working Groups:** Working groups are essential for collaboration, coordination, and information sharing among stakeholders. However, funding shortages limit consistent engagement, affecting overall coordination.

- **Gradual and Potential Merging of Field and National Structures Where Relevant:** Merging some field-level working groups with national-level structures should be a gradual process to avoid unintended consequences. Adequate time for planning and integration is essential to ensure a smooth transition.

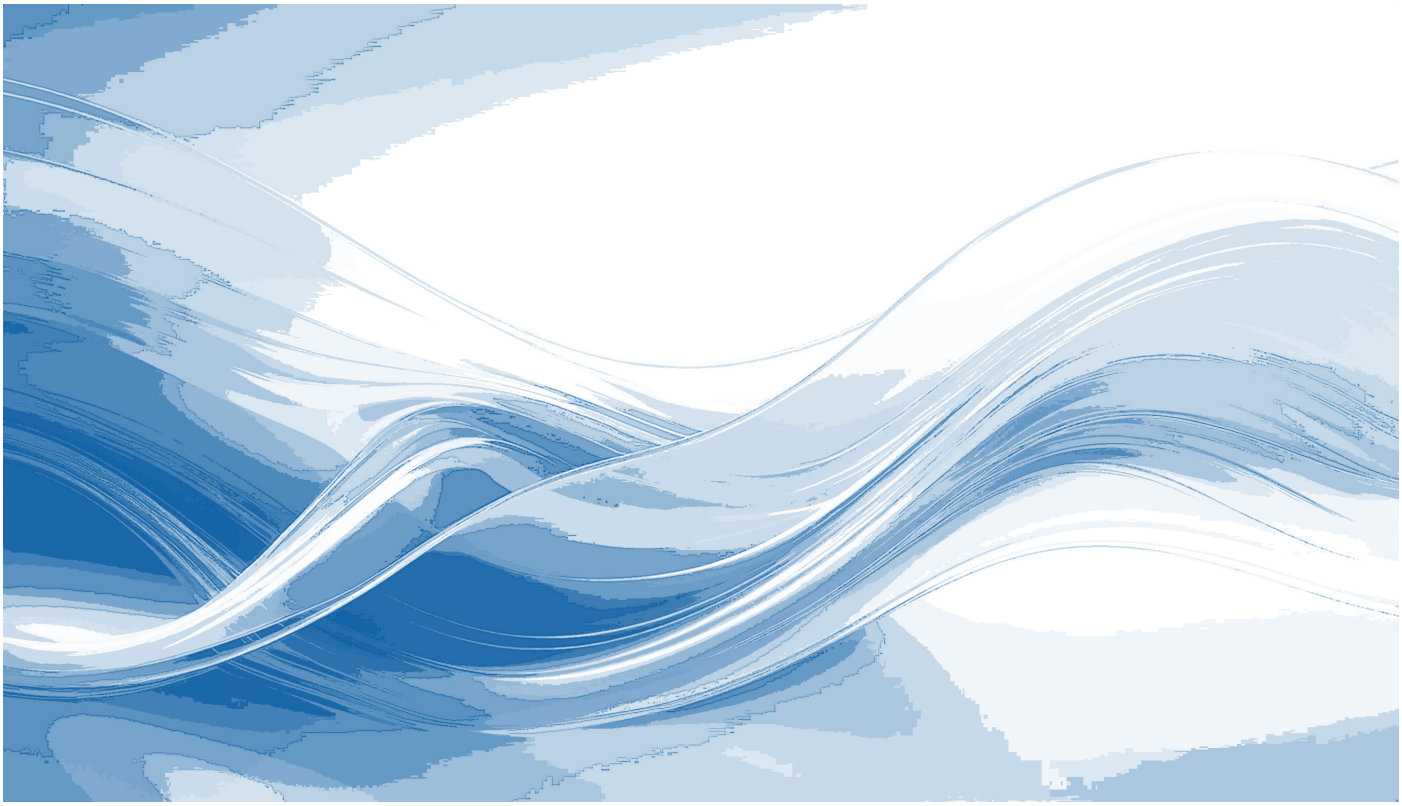
- **Increase Government Engagement in Coordination:** Stronger involvement from government entities in field-level coordination is necessary to ensure alignment with national priorities and integration of refugee response activities into national strategies.

Summary of the main points from the potential roles and contributions of the ISWG at the field level - groups' discussions:

Harmonizing Coordination Efforts: The ISWG is poised to maintain its pivotal role in harmonizing coordination across working groups at both the national and field levels. This role includes further aligning initiatives with strategic priorities and enhancing cross-sector coordination to ensure it is both effective and attuned to the evolving needs on the ground.

Provide Strategic Guidance to the Field: The ISWG has established itself as a vital contributor, effectively assisting and advising field working groups in incorporating strategic topics into their discussions and aligning with the broader directives set by national working groups. This collaboration has significantly enhanced coherence in planning and execution. To build on this foundation, further strengthening these efforts will not only sustain but also amplify the impact and efficiency of their initiatives.

Facilitate Communication and Priority Setting in the Field: The ISWG can further support field-level efforts by fostering open communication among partners, facilitating discussions to establish clear priorities, and providing guidance to set actionable goals. Maintaining regular information sharing can ensure that all partners are updated on progress and any changes in priorities or operational needs.



Session 2: Leadership Skills

The session commenced with an ice-breaking exercise, prompting participants to share qualities that make their leaders inspirational. The spectrum of attributes ranged from integrity and courage to wisdom and eloquence, with attendees citing a diverse array of influential figures, including parents, teachers, public leaders, and friends. The leadership skills session delved into defining leadership and exploring various indicators of strong leadership and characteristics of good leaders. Participants were divided into groups to discuss challenging scenarios and potential routes for addressing them, fostering a range of perceptions on leadership with commonalities emerging.

Summary of the main points from the leadership groups' conversations:

- **Strategic Leadership Development:** The conversations emphasized the need for cultivating strategic leadership skills that are responsive to evolving challenges within humanitarian efforts. This involves training leaders to think critically, act decisively, and inspire their teams amidst complex scenarios, particularly in crisis management contexts.

- **Building Adaptive Capacity:** Acknowledging the dynamic nature of humanitarian environments, the groups discussed the importance of building leaders' capacity to adapt and respond to changing circumstances. This includes fostering agility in decision-making processes and the ability to pivot strategies effectively when unexpected challenges arise.

- **Promoting Inclusive Leadership Practices:** There was a strong focus on the need for more inclusive leadership that encourages diverse input and leverages varied perspectives for better decision-making. Emphasizing inclusive practices ensures that all stakeholder voices are heard, enhancing the overall strategy and implementation of projects.

- **Leadership in Resource Optimization:** A key topic of discussion was the optimization of resources through strategic leadership. This entails not only identifying innovative sources of funding and allocating resources efficiently but also anticipating future needs and potential constraints to mitigate risks and maximize impact.

- **Fostering Leadership Accountability:** Ensuring accountability at all levels of leadership was identified as crucial. Discussions centered on establishing robust mechanisms for accountability that align with organizational goals and ethical standards, thereby strengthening trust and integrity within teams.

Session 3: Coordination Skills

The session began with participants divided into groups to delve into the intricacies of Jordan's coordination structure and discuss scenarios, prompting exploration of the effectiveness of the coordination structure in field. Key questions explored the structure's efficacy, including the Inter-sector collaboration, Amman-to-field coordination, and the potential necessity for adjustments.

Summary of the main points from the groups' conversations:

Coordination Challenges and Recommendations:

- **Lack of Commitment and Interest:** Stakeholders often lack commitment, which hinders coordination. Clarifying roles and changing the modalities of meetings could focus attention on action-oriented engagements.

- **Representation Issues:** High turnover and non-decision-makers attending meetings impede continuity. Ensuring appropriate representation with decision-making authority and improving handover processes were recommended.

- **Coordination Gaps between Field and National Levels:** A disconnect between field-level coordination and national operations was identified. Stronger communication and better alignment between the two are essential for coherent strategies and more effective implementation.

- **Streamline Working Groups:** Streamline and potentially reducing the number of working groups to streamline operations, minimize duplication of efforts, and enhance focused discussions.
- **Advocate for Flexible Funding:** Flexible funding mechanisms would better address the ground-level needs and allow sectors to respond more effectively to changing circumstances.

- **Increase Government Engagement:** Greater engagement from government authorities was recommended to ensure alignment with national priorities and more effective integration of refugee response strategies into national policies.

Recommendations & Next Steps

The workshop concluded with several key recommendations aimed at strengthening coordination and leadership in the field within the Syria Response framework:

- **Revisit and Enhance the Current Coordination Structure:** Review and, if necessary, modify the existing coordination structures in the field and camps. This includes identifying gaps, establishing clear roles, and addressing any coordination challenges that may arise.
- **Strengthen Dialogue and Coordination with Field Operations:** Improve communication between field-level operations and national coordination mechanisms was highlighted as essential. This could be achieved through regular inter-sector visits and enhanced collaboration, ensuring greater connectivity between field and national operations.
- **Strengthen Inter- and Cross-Sector Linkages:** Enhance collaboration and resource sharing between sectors at the field and camp levels to maximize resource utilization and avoid duplication.
- **Increase Government Representation within ISWG and in the field:** Strengthen gover-nment and refugees involvement at the ISWG and field levels to ensure alignment with national policies and a more integrated response.
- **Strengthen Localization and Collaboration with Local Actors:** Foster stronger partnerships with local actors and ensure refugee needs are integrated into national policies and localized responses.
- **Facilitate Adaptive Leadership and Collaboration:** Equip field coordinators with the necessary tools and skills to foster a collaborative and inclusive leadership approach, particularly given resource constraints and the evolving refugee response.

The Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG) remains committed to supporting Jordan 3RP partners at both national and field levels, aiming to develop and improve overall response coordination and processes. The planned next steps include:

- **Strengthen Field-National Sector Linkages and Communication:** With an emphasis on fostering better collaboration across field and national levels, the ISWG will enhance communication channels and strengthen linkages between field operations and national coordination mechanisms. This effort is crucial for ensuring cohesive and well-coordinated responses across various sectors and levels.
- **Conduct Follow-Up Trainings:** To further empower partners, the ISWG will organize refresher trainings focused on Information Management and the effective use of Activity Info. These sessions are particularly important given its recent implementation in Jordan and will help streamline planning and reporting processes.
- **Enhance Field Visits:** Regular field visits by sector chairs and co-chairs are planned to ensure ongoing engagement, deepen understanding of field-level challenges, and strengthen field-national coordination.
- **Elevate Partner Concerns and Recommendations:** The ISWG is dedicated to actively addressing the concerns and recommendations of 3RP partners in Jordan. This initiative is integral to a broader strategy that aims to incorporate partner feedback into the 2025 planning process, ensuring responses are well-informed by on-the-ground experiences and needs.
- **Ongoing Advocacy and Best Practice Sharing:** The ISWG will facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned across sectors and regions. This continuous sharing is essential for the continuous improvement of coordination efforts and response strategies.

Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG)