



Basic Needs Working Group - Meeting Minutes

Location, Date & Time	UNHCR Conference Room (Alexandrina) and Online, Teams Meeting, Wednesday 28 th February 2024, from 11:00 to 12:30
Facilitator	Kylie Alcoba Wright, Senior Operations Officer (UNHCR), Ylenia Franco, Operations Associate (UNHCR), Mariana Arnautu, UKR Program Manager (World Vision Romania), Ana Cosma, Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) & Livelihoods Manager (Save the Children)
Participants	UNHCR, Save the Children, World Vision, Association 4 Change, Youth 4 Youth Foundation, Plan International, IOCC, Action against Hunger, National Food Bank Federation
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Situational Update</i> • <i>Updated Basic Needs ToR</i> • <i>DSU Contingency Drill</i> • <i>Presentation of organizations' activities and priorities for 2024</i> • <i>Food sub-sector: case management in Romania</i> • <i>AOB</i>
Agenda Topic	Main Discussion and Action Points in BLUE
Situational Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population movement trends: providing weekly the updated figures. The number of Ukrainians in Romania reached 77,347. Lowest peak registered. In February 2023 the highest peak was reached with up to around 115,000 Ukrainians in Romania. Observed a decrease of 500 UKR refugees per week. • As for Temporary Protection issued insofar, number of 154,222 with 1,507 third country nationals and 152,715 Ukrainians. Average of 2,000 TPs issued a month. In 2023, regular breakdown between females (65%) and males (35%). An increase in the male population (44%) was recorded, with females (56%). • Reasons on the decrease: because of the impact of the low temperatures, it was expected a higher number of refugees crossing the border. This year recorded a decrease compared to end 2022. Changes in assistance of 50/20 Programme and delays for payment release. Stabilization may be due on the fact that first payments release started (Jul-Dec 2023). • Pendular movements are in the same stable trend (3,480,638). • Monitoring the situation at the borders with partners, to understand why UKR refugees are returning to Ukraine. A third of the refugees are stable and the rest are transiting apparently. Decrease in the population is due to qualitative information (Gov assistance, only 33% of the working age population are working, savings running low, not meeting the accommodation needs). There is a new tool deployed at the border from UNHCR on border monitoring, data is in process of collection.

<p>Updated Basic Needs ToR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ToR defines objectives, principles, key tasks, definition and membership and meeting arrangements. The ToR and Action Plan will be shared with the BNWG for further comments from the partners. • BNWG will coordinate further with all organizations, looking at engaging further with organizations at the local level. The focus is on supporting capacities and see how to enhance welfare and services benefitting refugees and host communities. Will focus on more sustainable responses, • Goal: contributing to the refugees’ access to sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance. • 4 subsectors: food assistance, shelter, accommodation and core relief items distributions, wash plans and cash-based assistance. • Definition: address the immediate and medium need needs of socioeconomically vulnerable households. Envisioned a targeted approach in relation to socioeconomic vulnerability criteria. Focus will be on fostering inclusions into the national systems and decreasing direct assistance. • Principles: fortifying the capacity of National and local system and try to adopt a community-based approach. Partnership and collaboration with the Gov. Ensure complementarity with the donors and partners, preparedness to the evolving context, meaningful engagement and capacity development, fostering coordination with the other sectors, transparency in decision-making and fostering the principle of do-no-harm across all interventions. • Key tasks: Agree on the terms of reference; update the plan of action with key deliverables in a specified time frame; conduct joint assessments and analysis; coordinate the provision of assistance on the basis of needs and vulnerabilities; promote comprehensive coverage, inter-agency and cross-sector interventions, and prevention of duplication in programmes and assistance; provide and compile sector’s regular updates for the Inter-Agency monthly report, for the purpose of information-sharing within the participating organizations; support partners in the development of strategies, guidelines and information management tools and provide technical support to collaboratively resolve programming, targeting and monitoring issues. • Membership and meeting arrangements: reaching out to partners to validate the co-leading, ToR and Action Plan of the BNWG; the Basic Needs WG is open to all interested agencies and NGOs involved in meeting the basic needs of refugees and other affected populations. Donors can be invited to attend the working group. Attendance to the Cash Working Group as a cross-sectorial WG is recommended and encouraged to further boost collaboration between the WGs. The monthly reporting will fall under the BNWG. The working group is foreseen to be led by Save the Children Romania and UNHCR with an additional NGO to be nominated in case of any interest. • Periodicity: the Basic Needs WG proposes to meet once every two months. Ad-hoc/thematic meetings and time-bound taskforces to address specific issues will be convened if necessary.
<p>DSU Contingency Drill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of shelter component in the framework of preparedness and contingency capacity. • Drill organized on 17-18th January upon request of the DSU. • Setting up two transit centres in Bacau and Galati counties. Intended to be transit centres for refugees to remain for maximum 72h.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of testing of capacity in setting up in less than 48h. • Predefined locations (62) at the country level. • Family tents, interconnectable tents and CRIs were pre-positioned from UNHCR WH. • Basic needs sector is also about at looking the capacity to anticipate and to keep the level of preparedness as much as possible. • The exercise was conducted jointly with the Government of Romania. • Evaluation of the shelter component; designed the outline of the camp based on an AGD approach is taken into account, together with WASH component. The camp was fully operational also in terms of electricity and lighting. For safety reasons, there is a significant need for outdoor lighting to mitigate the risks associated with the absence of external illumination at night. • A formal debriefing with DSU together with capacity building and training on lessons learnt will follow.
<p>Presentation of organizations' activities and priorities for 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the response in terms of the activities and the priorities for this year under the basic needs; • IOCC: BN plans for 2024 are related to CRIs (blankets, scholar kits and hygiene kits) that will be distributed from through the network of the Romanian Orthodox Church. • ACF: providing cooking ingredients for the refugees center (Tei Center), will close the program at the end of May 2024. Cash activities: cash distribution in Tulcea, Maramures and Suceava. In 2024 will reach 333 beneficiaries (130 EUR per person). • World Vision Romania: providing hygiene kits and food vouchers in two locations in RomExpo with DGASMB and in Constanta, doing DI. 42% reached individuals out of 11,500 HH target. The voucher value is 225 RON and 1 HK per family (120 RON value). Planned to reach also Valcea, Galati, Brasov and Braila. Targeting the most vulnerable people. Intention to launch a local campaign where there is a concentration of large number of refugees (app in process of development). WV runs Happy Bubble Centers (Cluj, Constanta, Bucharest, Suceava, Iasi), supporting integration process and facilitating access to refugees to benefit from childcare services in partnership with Child Protection Department and School Inspectorate. • UNHCR: targeted approach to most vulnerable through distribution of CRIs based on the WH stock and cash assistance. Developed with participation a joint IA tool (scorecard) to be used in several programs. Developed a winterization plan for the beneficiaries and distributing winter-specific items (winter clothes, thermos, etc.). Supporting the service hubs (Romexpo, Cattia center and Nicolina centre) together with UNHCR partners. Cash is part of the strategy as an important part of the response, complementarity between cash and NFI distribution exists. Supporting the shelter component and conducting site assessment and monitoring with DSU to better have the picture of the capacity at the National level within this transitional context under the shelter subsector. Looking on how to engage with RLOs and CBOs on the work under the BN sector. The WASH component remains under the BN sector as there are partners appealing under the BN sector

	<p>for the RRP 2024. UNICEF and UNHCR offered support in ensuring proper facilities installation in RomExpo (including heating system). Cash for winter program: assisted insofar around 1,200 people and enrolled around 2,200.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth 4 Youth: involved in distribution of HK in 2022 within the framework of sexual reproductive health, complementing activities with other partners and NGOs with a focus on adolescents and young women. Available condoms in stock. Pregnancy tests were also provided. Active in the Health WG. The organization will be supporting Ukrainian young people and young people for the basic needs. The organization works mainly on social cohesion and working within the school system in cooperation with UNICEF. • Association 4 Change: the purpose for 2024 is to provide high quality social programs and services tailored to the needs of vulnerable. Focus on the integrated management of services in community, especially in a UTCB and Edmond centre. • Save the Children Romania: offering informational support and HK. Offering NFIs, vouchers according to the needs. Child-friendly spaces available, childcare for women willing to be employed (common project with Jobs4Ukr, cover 14 kids in daycare center and part of the fees for the kindergarten in Bucharest), MHPSS, RO and EN courses for children, psychological counselling. Vouchers for winterization were distributed with around 2,000 vouchers were distributed. • National Food Bank: supported since the beginning of the conflict through special transport through UKR border. A Food Bank is also in Ukraine and Moldova. For this year, there is no special campaign for the Ukrainian refugees, but if identified a beneficiary, the NFB will support with food through NGOs. Short-term products are received and suitable for organizations able to prepare hot meals.
<p>Food sub-sector: case management in Romania</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing best practices and interventions with a set of recommendation on communities to be mobilized to provide basic needs and other services under the Social Store for Refugees in Romania. • The monographic analysis of the Social Store for refugees aims to: Describe a good practice model, standardize the means it can be used in similar social contexts, internationally and explore the evolution scenarios of this type of social institution for the next period. • World Vision supported the distribution of food and non-food items worth over USD 14 million to more than 120,000 unique Ukrainian beneficiaries. Social stores created opportunities to increase the partnership between civic organizations and public institutions and administrative capacity to respond in an harmonious way. Social stores were developed into offering a wide range of social resources needed for community development and community integration of refugees. They are means of interaction and information exchange within the refugee group in the locality and spaces for opportunities to support local suppliers of goods and services. Remarkd the importance of good communication with all actors involved. • 3 scenarios presented: Intervention mechanism in emergency situations; Integrated Community Assistance Centers of Ukrainian Refugees; Social centers for vulnerable people. • Recommendations: identifying a legal framework in Romania that facilitates the involvement of private companies in donation actions to product banks; Bonus/premium in the public space of companies that, through donation acts, get involved in the life of the community; the organization of training sessions for the purpose of intervention in emergency

	<p>situations; World Vision and local partners to get involved in the training of community facilitators, with skills in public communication, for interventions in emergency situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered 976 tons of food from March 2022 until end of 2023 through social stores following the needs. The social store was developed at Romexpo Hub by DGASMB, WV and other NGOs. 117k people were reached in total. Distributed food kits, around 500 tons of food were distributed around RomExpo. An ad-hoc meeting on food under the BNWG will be organized in March on food assistance with the participation of the NFB and DGASMB potentially.
<p>AOB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First BNWG meeting in 2024, resuming the discussions on continued coordination in the framework of the Basic Needs Sector within the RRP 2024. 22 Appealing partners for 2024 are under this sector, the number of partners has increased. A survey will be circulated among the members for completion through a link (Kobo) on improvements of BNWG meetings. Prolongation of 50/20 Programme: until 31/03/2024. First preliminary discussions are on the table for potential extension of the Programme for three additional months, TBC. All partners should be requested to report in ActivityInfo each month. Partners are encouraged to report every month under the Basic Needs sector for the purpose of the monthly Inter-Agency Romania Update. Showcasing the work that has been done through reporting.
<p style="text-align: center;">Next meeting: TBC from 11:00 to 12:30 Location: UNHCR Conference Room- Alexandrina 20-22 and Online, Teams Meeting</p>	