

Terms of Reference for the Education Sector Working Group - Lebanon

Background

Since April 2011, due to the conflict in Syria, people started fleeing to neighboring countries including Lebanon. Recent statistics from UNHCR show that there are currently 726,340 registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Around 50% of the population is children, and over 240,000 are school-aged. This number is projected to become as much as a 420,000 by the end of 2013 if the current influx rate persists.¹

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) have taken a very open and active approach to the education needs of all children. In consultation with UNHCR, UNICEF and other partners, the Ministry has made it clear that all Syrian children are permitted to enroll in Lebanese public schools and has extended its services to all enrolled students.

However, the schools in areas of high-concentration of refugees are often overstretched in meeting the needs of Lebanese children, and many children are still on waiting lists. The humanitarian community is called upon to provide support to the MEHE to increase capacity of providing formal and non-formal education options to refugee children while not over-burdening the national systems.

Objectives

- Support organization working in the education sector to deliver quality formal and non-formal programmes that provide access to education opportunities for all children
- To strengthen the coordination capacity response of all education partners in Lebanon to support the Government of Lebanon (GoL) in providing access to quality education in safe and protective learning environment.
- To ensure a timely, coherent and effective education response by mobilizing stakeholders to respond in a strategic manner to the Syrian Humanitarian crisis.
- To ensure prioritization, evidence-based actions and gap-filling; and to enhance accountable, predictable and effective emergency education response to children and youth amongst the affected population.

Working modalities of the Group

- These terms of reference cover a period equal to the duration of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon to the extent that a humanitarian response remains necessary, or until 31 December 2014, whichever is

¹ UNHCR Registration Trends for Syrians, UNHCR Lebanon, 11 July 2013 (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=1020>)

sooner. Should the crisis extend beyond that date, it can be revised when the members, in consensus with the lead and co-lead of the group, agree to revise the document.

- This TOR is for the Beirut-based national level Education Sector Working Group, while field-based Education Sector Working Groups will be established at sub-national level.
- UNHCR has the lead to coordinate the emergency education response together with UNICEF as co-lead.

The role of the Lead and Co-Lead agencies are further detailed in a later section of this TOR but in summary the Lead agency coordinates strategic ways forward setting guide lines for the response that are aligned with Government priorities. They will coordinate meetings, oversee the strategic planning, implementation, and monitor progress and identify gaps while continuously advocating the importance of education in the general response to the crises. The Co-Lead agency will technically support the coordinator, provide strategic policy guidance, capacity development and technical support to partners and stakeholders in strategic planning, implementation and monitoring including information management and mapping interventions. The Education Sector Working Group will report to the Assistant Representative (Coordination) UNHCR /inter-agency coordinator.

- All participating education partners form the Lebanon Education Sector Working Group. There is no limit to the number of members, and all organizations involved in education activities are encouraged to participate in the meeting. Each member organization should be represented by one person. An updated list of members will be circulated on a regular basis, and will also be available at the UNHCR portal.²
- The Education Sector Coordination meeting will take place on the first Tuesday of every month at 10 am unless decided otherwise by the majority of members. The venue of the meeting will be at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) unless otherwise decided by the working group members, and the duration of the meeting will be a maximum of 2 hours.
- An agenda will be shared a minimum of 3 days before the meeting, and the meeting minutes will be circulated within 3 working days after the meeting has been held.
- Updated *Education Activities matrix* (which include the 5W: Who, What, Where, When and for Whom) will be sent from each Education partner on their recent education activities to the education sector information manager with a copy to the lead and co-lead, on or before the first Friday of each month. The information manager will ensure that the updates are compiled and reviewed jointly with the lead and co-lead after which it is sent to the regional working groups for verification. The matrix will be shared within a week after the deadline. The information drawn from the reported activities in the *Education Activities Matrix* will provide a basis for needs and gaps analysis, which enables an improved targeting of the response. By consensus, the *Education Activities Matrix* structure and contents can be revised by the working group.
- An education strategy will be developed collectively and all education partners will be encouraged to use the strategy for planning, implementation and monitoring of their education activities. The strategy will be developed during August 2013 and finalized by the end of October 2013.
- Based on needs, technical task forces can be formed to find/recommend solution to specific education issues.

Main responsibilities of Education sector working group members

² <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

- Proactively work to improve coordination and harmonization of education assessments and analysis – involving all relevant partners – and sharing outcomes widely, both within the education sector and to the wider humanitarian community.
- Continually report on education activities to the sector group through the *Education activities matrix*.
- Participate in the development and sharing of the education strategy, ensuring consistency with other sector strategies and in accordance with MEHE standards, the UNHCR Global Education Strategy, UNICEFs Core Commitment for Children, INEE and SPHERE standards. The strategy will include detailed activity plans, indicators for monitoring, logical framework, contingency plan and joint plans for fund-raising, advocacy and visibility.
- Provide technical support to the sector group according to areas of expertise of each member organization
- Maintain close links with sectors such as Protection/Child Protection, Shelter, Health, WASH and other relevant sectors.
- Coordinate closely with The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, The Ministry of Social Affairs and other institutions for sector specific service delivery and policy making.
- Sharing methodologies, studies, curriculum and lessons learnt within the Lebanese context.
- Collectively identify the capacity building needs and assist in building the capacity of education partners.
- Ensure that adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review outcome of education interventions and progress against implementation plans. Aim to improve transparency towards international and national organizations and local and national authorities.

Main responsibilities and tasks of the Lead of the Education Sector Working Group (UNHCR):

Coordination

- Ensure alignment of interventions with government policies and strategies.
- Ensure inclusion of key humanitarian partners for the sector, respecting their mandates and program priorities.
- Ensure coordination mechanisms between all humanitarian education partners, including national and international NGOs, UN agencies and other organizations or institutions involved in education. This includes ensuring effective links, communication and information management, as well as technical working groups and coordination platforms as appropriate.
- Ensure cooperation and information sharing between the education sector and other relevant sectors so that education partners are aware of key inter-sectorial issues and actions are taken as appropriate.
- Facilitate the exchange of information and ensure that education sector members are aware of existing technical standards and guidelines as well as mainstreaming crosscutting issues such as age, gender and disabilities.
- Facilitate linkage with government counterparts on national and regional level as well as the local communities regarding education issues.

Needs assessment, analysis and strategy development:

- Facilitate needs assessments, analysis and gap identification, and share it with all education partners and other stakeholders.
- Together with education partners develop an education strategy including agreed standards, response plan and exit strategy.
- Drawing lessons-learned from past activities and revising strategies accordingly
- Support contingency planning process so that a contingency plan is in place to deal with significant changes in situation and number of refugees.

Monitoring and reporting

- Encourage education partners to update agreed *Education Activities Matrix*.
- Ensure key issues from the updated *Education Activities Matrix* are highlighted and shared.
- Deciding on common education indicators for monitoring together with the partners
- Ensure that responses are in line with existing standards and guidelines
- Ensure that responses are considering and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as age, gender and disabilities.

Capacity building

- Identify the capacity building needs of organizations involved in education.
- Support to organize trainings, share technical documents and work together with technical working group to find solutions to technical issues as required.

Main responsibilities and tasks of Co-lead of Education Sector Working Group (UNICEF):

Coordination

- Compile, evaluate, and keep up-to-date information on humanitarian education partners and stakeholders through the *Education Activities Matrix* (which include the 4W: Who, What, Where and When), their capacities and interventions
- Responsible for maintaining the *Education Activities Matrix* and sharing the information to all education partners.
- Provide technical oversight to the development and implementation of Education strategy and workplan/s with partners and stakeholders.
- Support on-going coordination among education partners and other stakeholders and facilitate technical working groups formed for specific purposes as required.

Needs assessment, analysis and strategy development

- Support effective and coherent education assessment and analysis involving all relevant partners, including the identification of gaps and implementation of sectorial responses through collective delivery.
- Provide technical guidance and actively participate in on-going agency assessments, analysis, planning, monitoring and response in education and ensure that results are shared among agencies.

- Encourage agencies to adopt adequate education related contingency planning and preparedness measures for potential significant changes in the situation (including increased Refugee numbers in future months)

Monitoring and reporting

- Encourage agencies to ensure that adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review outcome of education interventions and progress against implementation plans; including an analytical interpretation of best available information in order to benchmark progress over time (monitoring indicators: quantity, quality, coverage, continuity and cost; with target population data disaggregated by sex, age, special needs etc.).
- Encourage adequate education outcome reporting from partners and effective information sharing (with all partners supporting education)

Relationship between the field based sector working group and the National, Beirut based, sector working group:

The centrally based education sector working group will be responsible for setting strategic direction for the sector but this direction is informed by the realities of implementation in the field. The Field based working groups will develop individual terms of reference for the group around the guidelines provided below:

- Coordinate activities at a level of implementation following strategic direction from the MEHE and the central working group.
- Provide inputs to the activity matrix for consolidation by the information manager of the Education Working Group in Beirut.
- Contextualization of national strategies, and address and agree on solutions to area-specific issues.
- Make inputs and provide feedback on the realities of implementation to inform strategic direction.
- Monitoring of regional achievements against national sector targets