####  MAQ Coordination Meeting

***Minutes of meeting***

Date: 19.05.2019

Place: Al Qaa Municipality

Participants: Mayor of Al Qaa, IRC, UNICEF, GVC, TDH-Italy, UNHCR, caritas, CLAC Qaa, ECHO, IRC, NRC, MSA

***Updates***

**Introduction of the mayor on various topics**:

The Mayor started by welcoming participants, after reminding participants that Qaa does not fall within any union, he elaborated on the agenda points he has put.

**On new arrivals:**

The mayor immediately jumped to the issue of the new comers which he thinks are mostly coming for socio-economic reasons that he does not understand as they pay a lot of money to smugglers to enter to Lebanon. The general perception towards Syrians is deteriorating.

He therefore stated that he won’t allow for new tents whether for the expansion of existing tents or establishing new tents. He also won’t accept families coming from other Bekaa areas unless exceptionally.

In my opinion the 50,000 LBP put for new tents is meant to discourage new comers partially, this was not brought up in the meeting. Its implementation remains sometimes sporadic as the municipality is not always able to identify new comers.

More municipalities will resort to imposing fees to cover their budget deficit and service delivery. The money of the IMF has not been paid yet, but will be paid in trenches over the next few weeks. But this will barely cover the expenses incurred in two years by municipalities and their accumulated debts.

The mayor mentioned the case of the Syrians arrested because of the steeling of archeological pieces or dealing with drugs.

**For the shops and labor:**

The campaign to close shops has not reach its goals as the mayor recognized he has been put under pressure by Al Qaa residents themselves and sometimes by some law enforcement leading to most of the shops reopening. He however will try again to curb the shop owners as according to him Syrians should not be allowed to own a shop or manage it.

Growing role of LAF MI in north Bekaa in monitoring NGOs, activities, Syrians and municipalities.

**WFP Shops**:

The mayor thinks two shops are not enough for the area and despite several requests, WFP did not convince him of the reasons behind only having two shops. Many refugees have their cards gathered and redeemed elsewhere.

A Caritas person mentioned also exploitation by some locals of the WFP cards. This is an issue that was already brought up in the last coordination meeting. WFP is not responsive to complaints.

**On SWM**:

It remains a partial issue as the municipality cannot properly cover the entire area of MAQ which spread over 180 KM2 and makes it impossible to do a collection of the waste for all the informal settlements.

The waste is dumped in a dumpsite in the wild. It is not treated.

The mayor has an interesting vision for sorting at source and is willing to collaborate in that field.

UNDP has offered a garbage truck with compactor to the municipality following our previous notes from the meeting in addition to garbage bins, but this does not entirely resolve the problem as an additional truck is needed in addition to sorting. The mayor does not want to have to go to Baalbeck facility which anyways does not include Qaa in the plans. He prefers to have his own sorting plant. It is an interesting opportunity to explore for SWM.

**On waste water**:

Al Qaa as much as other towns/ villages suffers from waste water in the absence of a network and a waste water treatment plant (WWTP).

The solution according to the mayor is a better control of the septic tanks, GVC is dislodging them and probably sending the WW to Iaat plant. But this remains to be verified as one of the participants mentioned that the water dislodged is put in a hole near the dumpsite. The mayor asked for his own dislodging truck but lacks of a vision on where the WW would end. He also envisions his own small WWTP.

**On education**

The mayor criticized the lack of compliance of transportation buses with safety rules and regulation and mentioned that most of them did not have plate numbers.

He also mentioned that sometimes the bus drivers are not paid. LOST is implementing the education project there.

**On healthcare:**

The mayor criticized MSF for not having a center in Qaa, but only in Hermel and Arsal and for only employing staff from outside Qaa who are not even holding work contracts. When MSF was asked about this by the mayor, they said it is a practice there.

Qaa municipality appreciates the capacity building of its staff. The mayor also tries to employ PWSN, 17 of them are on its payroll. He asked for support for that.