Meeting Minutes of Economic Empowerment Sector Coordination Meeting

For the SET (Southeast Türkiye) Region

Meeting Date: 2023-07-25
Meeting Time: 11:00am-12:00pm
Meeting Location: MS Teams
Chair Agencies: UNDP&FAO

The meeting chaired and documented by Semiha Bal/Regional Livelihood and Coordination Analyst/UNDP

Attendees:

1. Semiha Bal, UNDP
2. Bekir Halhalli, SENED
3. Carla Trimmer, UNHCR
4. Asuman Baba, GIZ TR
5. Ali Azizi, SENED
6. Tunc Gunduz, UNHCR
7. Funda Suran, İpekyolu Development Agency
8. Ertan Aktan, FAO
9. Usame Çolakoğlu, Kızılay
10. Fatma Mehtap Ozdemir, Qatar Charity
11. Kubilay Karagoktas, IFRC
12. Gozde Aras, FAO
13. Miki Takahashi, UNDP
14. Halit Almalati, IOM

Meeting Agenda:

1. Introduction
2. SEECO Project Updates by Funda Suran/Team Leader, SEECO Project- Silk Road Development Agency (10 mins)
3. 3RP Updates by Miki Takahashi/UNDP 3RP Livelihoods Sector Coordinator (5 mins)
    a) Sector level updates on EQ transition
    b) Program and priorities for the rest of 2023
4. Updates from Sector Partners (2mins each)
    a) Projects/Plans
    b) What are the EQ Response and EES Response Merging Plans
5. Closure & AOB

Meeting Notes:

- Funda Suran, Team Leader from İpekyolu Development Agency, presented the SEECO Project, which is a comprehensive initiative to support women and youth-led businesses in the Southeast Anatolia Region.
    - The SEECO program is a valuable initiative that is helping to promote economic empowerment and competitiveness in the Southeast Anatolia Region of Turkey.
    - The project aims to promote social and economic empowerment of women and youth through social entrepreneurship in the Southeast Anatolia Region of Turkey.
    - The project will create new employment areas for women and youth, increase awareness on environmental and social issues, and support the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region.
    - The program has already had a significant impact on the region, and it is expected to continue to have a positive impact in the years to come.
    - For more information, please visit this link https://www.seeco.gov.tr/homepage
    - For more information on the delivered presentation please refer to the attached copy of the PPT.
- Miki Takahashi provided updates on the earthquake response in the region, including the transition to a new coordination structure and the recent updates on the 3RP EES.
    - The UN Flash Appeal and OCHA-led earthquake coordination structure focused on South-East Türkiye is phasing out on August 17th and moving toward a transition structure with 9 sectors, building on the 3RP and UNSDCF coordination structures.
    - RCO-led discussions by the UNCT+ on the transition plan have been finalized. Sector coordinators have submitted the transition document to OCHA.
    - As part of the transition coordination structure, RCO has established 3 offices (Gaziantep, Hatay, and Kahramanmaraş) and is co-leading the coordination with OCHA.
    - Planning for 2024 will start in September. The 3RP 2024 will include earthquake response.
    - The 3RP EES will merge the EQ Livelihoods and Early Recovery sectors into the EES.
    - The priority areas for the economic empowerment sector are focused on facilitating the transition to formal employment, engaging with the private sector, and strengthening assessment/analysis and M&E.
    - The sector is planning to organize several activities to support these priority areas, including a best practice/knowledge exchange workshop on incentives/subsidies provided to employers for higher retention of refugees, a mapping of private sector engagement by EES partners, and the development of a joint M&E framework.

- Other partners shared their own updates on their work to support economic empowerment in the region.
    - **UNHCR** is supporting 7 cooperatives in the earthquake-affected area.
        - 5 of the cooperatives are in Gaziantep, and 2 are located in Hatay.
        - UNHCR has not yet started providing support to the cooperatives in Hatay but will do so in a few weeks.
        - UNHCR will provide equipment and materials to help the cooperatives continue their activities.
    - **Qatar Charity**
        - Job creation and job placement: Qatar Charity has placed 400 people in jobs with companies.
        - Entrepreneurship and acceleration programs: In partnership with BINAA organization in Istanbul, Qatar Charity is supporting 250 entrepreneurs.
        - Earthquake response: Qatar Charity has proposed a rehabilitation program in Nurdağı, Gaziantep in partnership with IOM. The approval process is pending, but the rehabilitation of workplaces will proceed.
        - Fabric establishment: Qatar Charity is also establishing a fabric factory in Şanlıurfa.
    - **SENED** raised the following challenges faced by SMEs:
        - High taxes: Business owners are struggling with the high taxes they have to pay.
        - Lack of support: Businesses are not receiving enough support from the government, especially in terms of the new minimum wage and taxes.
        - Need for revitalization: Earthquake-affected SMEs need help to revitalize their businesses. This includes providing them with machines, employment support, and other resources.
        - SMEs moving out of the region: Many SMEs have moved out of the region, which has further harmed the local economy. It would be helpful to create a service mapping to track the movement of SMEs and identify ways to support them.
    - **GIZ Türkiye**
        - GIZ has already started activities to support employment and SMEs. The PEP project is coming to an end in February 2024, but GIZ will continue to work on formalization, employment, and registration activities in collaboration with BMZ, its main donor.
        - The project mainly targets job creation, job promotion, and formalization. GIZ will share more details about the future of the project in upcoming meetings. The project will target 11 provinces.
        - For more information on PEP- Promoting economic prospects for refugees and the host community in Türkiye Project please visit following link: https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/77109.html
    - **IOM**
        - They are targeting small businesses in 11 earthquake-affected provinces through their local development project.
        - They provide workshops to help companies restart their businesses.
        - IOM has one project in Şanlıurfa for livestock support for host-country members, as well as refugees, to support small businesses.

- **TRC**
  - ISDEP-2, the "Supporting the Transition to the Labor Market Project", financed by the European Union under FRIT 2 and mediated by the World Bank between the EU and Turkish authorities, will be implemented by the MoLSS, İŞKUR and Turkish Red Crescent.
  - The main objective of the project is to support the ESSN and Turkish citizens' access to the labor market by increasing their employability, and to support the exit of the Social Cohesion Assistance (ESSN) program beneficiaries who are close to the labor market from the ESSN.is a project funded by the European Union to support the transition to the labor market for people in Turkey.
  - The project will be implemented in the provinces of Adana, Bursa, Gaziantep, İstanbul, İzmir, Kocaeli, Konya, and Şanlıurfa.
  - The target beneficiaries are local people living, working, and looking for a job in these provinces, as well as migrants with temporary protection/international protection status.
  - Active labor market programs that will be offered under the project include job training, job placement, and entrepreneurship support.
  - The implementation process will be carried out by İŞKUR and Red Crescent with the technical support of the World Bank.
  - A local kickoff meeting will be held in early September to share more details about the project.
  - For more information and reaching to the application form please visit following link: https://ee.humanitarianresponse.info/x/QFb4Cj5s

- The meeting concluded with a discussion of the way forward and the need to continue working together to support economic empowerment in the Southeast Anatolia Region. The stakeholders will continue to share information and insights on the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.
- The next meeting date & time will be shared among the SET Region mail group accordingly.