####  MAQ Coordination Meeting

***Minutes of meeting***

Date: 15/05/2019

Place: Al Qaa Municipality

Participants: Mayor of Al Qaa, UNHCR, GVC, Medair UNHCR, MSA-IRC, IRC, Himaya, CLAC-Qaa, Plan International, Caritas, AMLDS, SRT-Qaa, SDC.

**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.

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.

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 reached 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 Syrians should not be allowed to own a shop or manage it.

The Mayor also highlighted the fact that Syrian refugees are even opening shops inside their informal settlements that sell items that do not comply with food security standards. The municipality have a food expert local that is conducting awareness sessions on food security standards as to avoid any medical emergencies.

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 to contract more shops (previously seven shops), WFP did not convince him of the reasons behind only having two shops. Many refugees have their cards gathered and redeemed elsewhere.

Caritas mentioned also exploitation by some locals of the WFP cards. This is an issue that was already brought up in the last coordination meeting. Mayor hopes that WFP are responsive to the above and to have analysis present next time as to how many contracted shops there are, beneficiaries receiving assistance and contracting shops process.

**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. GVC is collaborating closely with the municipality on the collection of solid waste in informal settlements.

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.

**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 perhaps a creation of one network channel rather than septic tanks, GVC is dislodging them and sending the WW to Iaat plant with a monitoring system set in place; however, GVC states that it also needs to be taken into consideration that there are multiple contractors in the area providing private dislodging services. 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 Basic Assistance**

96% of the population residing in Al Qaa (around 2,500 HHs) are scored severely vulnerable by the desk formula and around 59% of the population (around 1,500 HHs) receive multipurpose cash assistance through UNHCR and WFP.

The average debt of Syrian HHs residing in Baalbeck-Hermel area increased to 1,000 USD based on VASyR 2018 report.

The mayor stated that he would appreciate advocacy with banks as to establish an ATM in Al Qaa as it would help all the locals and refugees and sort of encourages refugees from purchasing or spending the cash elsewhere.

Himaya, Caritas and mayor flagged the issue of inclusion errors which held a lot of frustration as they are witnessing a lot of pressure in the field and following observation they had seen a lot of families excluded from the cash assistance but are in dire need of cash as they are severely vulnerable while also witnessing a lot of cases that are less vulnerable and receiving cash assistance.

It was explained that unfortunately at the moment there isn’t a mechanism in place to tackle inclusion errors; however, discussions are ongoing with Beirut on the matter as Basic Assistance is aware of this issue and will try to find the best suitable mechanism.

BA attached a briefing note with regards to assistance provision as well as please note to contact IRC in North for PCAP cases and UNHCR for any referrals or inquiries.

BA also will plan for info sessions to be conducted to NGO staff as there was confusion on the targeting system.

**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. He also mentioned that the contracted trucks used to mobile clinics are not adherent to safety.

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.

Father Lian mentioned that they have a PHC operating in Al Qaa and assisting a lot of refugees and locals and seeks support if possible to open a night shift and be able to expand the services provided throughout the entire day.

***Caritas are planning to conduct a Marathon in August titled Women Empowerment and would appreciate if any support is present financially and/or sponsors.***

***Action points***

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| Action | Who |
| WFP to provide feedback on the above inquiries raised by the mayor  | WFP |
| Follow up on issues of fraud.  | WFP |
| Follow up on info sessions to NGO staff on targeting  | BA UNHCR  |
| Provide feedback on the transportation challenges faced as well as waste water management and garbage disposal.  | UNICEF  |
| Follow up on MSF transportation inquiries  | Health UNHCR  |