**National Social Stability Working Group Meeting**

Minutes – 13 December 2017 – Beirut

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| **Name** | Social Stability Working Group meeting | **Meeting Date** | 13/12/17 |
| **Meeting Location** | UNDP | **Meeting Time** | 1.30 pm |
| **Co-Chair person** | Bastien Revel – UNDP  Rasha Akil - UNHCR | **Meeting Duration** | 1,5 hours |
| **Minutes Prepared by** | Bastien Revel – UNDP |  |  |

**Participants:** NRC, SCI, Caritas, Mercy Corps, MoF, Positive Planet, Un Ponte Per, Expertise France, UNDP, DPNA, DRC, JICA, WVI, University of Balamand, UNHCR, PU-AMI, CESVI, ANERA, UN Women, SIF, Fair Trade Lebanon, International Alert.

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome & Introduction

2. LCRP 2018 Update

3. Situation and Response Analysis

4. AOB

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| **1** | **Welcome and introduction** |
|  | The chair welcomed the participants on behalf of the co-leads. The agenda was approved with a slight change in order of points, starting with the field updates. |
| **2** | **LCRP Update** |
|  | The overall LCRP has been adopted and sent to region and had the steering committee meeting. We stand at the fact that appeal is slightly less than last year (2.68 bnUSD vs. 2.75bnUSD in 2017) which is the first time that the appeal is decreasing. There are a total of 120 partners contributing.  Social Stability is among the sectors with smaller appeals but it is the sector with the second largest number of partners.  The chapter was approved by the steering committee with minor comments or changes. This included putting municipality police into a separate output, revising the targets to only include vulnerable areas, and toning down some of the language around ‘conflict’.  In total cumulated appeal from 62 partners in the sector is 150 M USD. The sector appeal remains stable at 109 million. The fact that partners appeal is higher than the sector’s appeal shows a higher interest in developing livelihoods programming.  In addition, looking at other information, including money secured, this year 22 M USD were secured but already 40 m is available for last year – this means that we already have more funding secured for 2018 than for 2017 from all partners who reported.  **Key indicators of 2017** **meanwhile the new dashboard is issued in January 2018**:  Concentration of projects on a smaller number of municipalities.  Only 70 municipalities have benefitted from social stability projects so far this year (20% of the sector target, compared to 100 in 2016) – total value 8.5mUSD  75 additional projects are ongoing (worth 14mUSD), to cover an additional 40 municipalities.  Only half of the vulnerable communities covered.  Softer activities are increasing  100 municipalities with functioning dialogue/conflict prevention initiatives  5,000 youth engaged in community initiatives, over 30,000 trained on positive lifestyle  108 local CSOs supported through these programmes   * **Protection Sector Strategy Presentation**   Access to Territory   * Admission to Syrian nationals is governed by the border regulations introduced in 2015 * Syrians fleeing persecution, conflict, and violence in Syria only admitted when falling within the exceptional humanitarian criteria * Continued government commitment to the principle of non-refoulement   Legal residency / Syrians   * 74% of Syrians (15 yrs and above) are without legal residency (2017 VASyR) * Households with all family members having legal residency has dropped to 19%   Legal residency / PRS   * Procedures for PRS are not communicated publicly and thus application varies across the country * Approximately 40% of PRS do not hold valid legal residency (Sept. 2016) * Since July 2017, PRS are able to receive legal residency free of charge for six months (renewable) * PRS children who turn 15 can renew on the basis of available documentation   Legal residency   * Importance of legal residency: * Freedom of movement (risk of arrest and detention) * Access to livelihood opportunities * Access to basic services * Ability to complete civil status registration   Waiver of renewal fees (GSO, February/March 2017)   * Applicable to certain categories of Syrian refugees only – those with UNHCR registration certificate * Challenges in the implementation of the circular   Civil status registration   * 135,000 Syrian children have been added to files of refugees registered with UNHCR * Documentary requirements, such as proof of legal stay and/or marriage * Complex and potentially costly procedure * Lack of awareness on procedure   Simplification of procedures for birth/marriage registration (PSD, September 2017)   * Valid legal residency of parents not required for birth registration. * Only one spouse requiring valid legal residency or entry card for marriage registration; legal residency not required if Syrian male marries Lebanese female. * Implementation/impact is being followed.   Protection Risks   * Arrests/Detentions: Immigration-related offences remain the most common reason for arrest and detention of Syrians * Evictions: Growing prevalence of evictions is resulting in protection challenges for displaced persons * Sponsorship: Sponsorship system may create a power differential that increases risk of exploitation and abuse * Social tensions: Increasing negative sentiments expressed against displaced persons, perceived competition for jobs and services, and restrictive measures by some municipalities   Persons with Specific Needs (PwSNs)  PwSNs constitute the most vulnerable population group and continue to face challenges in accessing basic rights and services   * 14% of displaced Syrians are persons with physical or intellectual disabilities, a rise of 2% compared to 2016 (2017 VASyR) * 2.7% of refugees registered with UNHCR are above 60 yrs of age * 10% of PRL and 8% of PRS have physical or intellectual disabilities, with one in four older persons affected (2015 Survey); 5% of youth (15-24 yrs) have a disability * NPTP assessments indicate that approximately 9% of Lebanese households have a family member with a physical or intellectual disability   Main Pillars of the Protection Strategy  1. Persons displaced from Syria have their basic rights respected, including protection against non-refoulement  2. Displaced population and host community are involved in addressing the challenges they face  3. National institutions are supported to enhance access to protection and services  4. Resettlement to a third country and other complementary pathways pursued (such as scholarships or labour mobility)  The chair highlighted that 2 out of the 4 protection risks are related to social stability which is why synergies between the sectors are important. As part of the ongoing discussion on the coordination review, the current proposal is even to merge both sectors under one umbrella.  As part of the ongoing work of the joint task force to identify area of convergence between the sectors, one of the focus is around committees – with a cross-mapping of committees of both sectors to see if some collaboration would be feasible. |
| **4** | **Situation and Response Analysis** |
|  | The field coordinators presented the updates from their respective areas in terms of tension and response to date.  **Mount Lebanon**  Key results from ARK perception survey:   * Inter-community relations vary between districts * The crisis has also impacted inter-Lebanese relations * Use of public services is limited in Northern Mt Lebanon   Massive Eviction Decision in Al Hadath (Baabda District)  In October 2017, in Hadath (Baabda), The Municipality Mayor announced a massive eviction decision, targeting Syrian refugees with illegal conditions (work, residency…) This is the first massive eviction of Syrian refugees that is being applied in BML area, as all previous massive eviction threats haven’t been implemented as of October 2017.  Background: **Back to February 2017**, a previous Municipal restriction by Al Hadath Municipality took place, by announcing the closure of illegal businesses and shops that were run by Syrian refugees and termination of illegal Syrian employment, and this announcement has been taken based on the decision of the Ministry of Labor. **Back to August 2017**, the Minister Bassil, had supported the generalization of the procedures plan implemented by the municipality against refugees during his visit to Al Hadath Municipality  Competition for jobs as well as political reasons driving the eviction decision allegedly.  Local community is against this decisions allegedly.  **There is tension recently regarding the lack or inefficiency of humanitarian and development interventions** at Municipalities to alleviate tension on host communities. Consequently, Municipalities feel currently that Ministries are not able to voice their challenges, so they don’t have authority on their decisions  **Evicted Cases:** Around 40 families have reportedly left due to pressure as of 27 Nov 2017. They are moving to the Chouf or to adjacent areas allegedly.    Response UNHCR, UNDP, NGOs and relevant Ministries have been following up, monitoring the situation and coordinating at all levels. UNHCR met with the Mayor to prevent the eviction but with no changes in his decision; UNHCR had raised it to the MoIM that declared that they are not responsible of this unlawful eviction decision.  The Inter-Agency Working Group of Beirut & Mount Lebanon held 2 exceptional meetings in November 2017 as it is the venue currently to discuss and manage assistance of concerned cases of this eviction with partners and relevant Ministries.  A master list has been prepared to record reported evicted cases (case numb or phone) aiming to keep track of evicted cases and avoid duplication of reporting cases by all partners. A Q&As document has been shared shortly for field staff and hotline officers. The IA agreed on assisting post-eviction families with one-off cash (more than 500 families with $300 by family) based on agreed criteria and/or on vulnerability assessment. In addition, partners agreed to support cases with PSS and legal assistance and counseling, as well as, shelter repair, and other. The IA agreed to conduct verification assessment visits to assisted cases with cash. Partners agreed to follow up on eviction cases in Al Hadath and other areas and Municipalities and to continue at all levels notably with relevant Ministries (MoIM, MoSDA, MoSA).  Eviction Threats elsewhere  **Several municipalities (Mansourieh, Dekweneh, Kahaleh)** announced evictions allegedly in **October and November 2017**, but didn’t apply it once international organizations, UN, NGOs and the ministries intervened.  **In jbeil** the municipality issued a decree in **November 2017**, asking all landlords and employers to share relevant documents on lease agreement and employed Syrian, and seems that Syrians with illegal stay in Lebanon might be asked to leave. Eviction has not been implemented. **Evictions are even portrayed as 'Protection measure’ presumably to protect refugees** from exploitative practices by landlords and forcing the latter to respect rules of sheltering and employing.  Other Trends  **In general, there is general tension and hostile discourse** across all areas between host and refugee community since the **30th June incident in Arsal**. **On 14 October 2017, the Lebanese Promise Party held a protest in Jeita (Keserwen)** with the participation of some municipalities in Keserwen, calling for the Lebanese government to remove Syrian nationals from the country. **Keserwan (Jeita and 2 other locations): Local authorities communicated in November 2017** that they prefer not to have any interventions that involve Syrians. For the meantime, updates to be shared when available on the situation  **There are also access Issues:** Miscommunication, lack of coordination with authorities and municipalities could be the factor that is leading to some access issues for some partners allegedly e.g. in BSS. Response: These issues are being managed at the IA WG of BML. All shelter and WASH activities are not accepted in BSS reportedly. Coordination is required before with municipalities. This mainly relates to legal issues of ownership/regulations. (They don’t want any such rehabilitation activities on potentially illegal infrastructure allegedly, but they are fine with protection/education related activities).  **South**  Tension mapping-areas   * Bint Jbeil: Rmeish, Ein Ebel, Bent Jubeil, Safad ElBattikh, Barachit * Hasbaya: Chebaa, ElHebbariye * Marjeyoun: El Khiam, Dardara 1, Dardara 2 & Wata ALKhiam, Kfar Kila, Marj ElKhokh, Qlaiaa, Touline, Taibe * Nabatieh: Nabatieh Fawqa, Nabatieh Tahta, KfarRoummane, Sir ElGharbieh * Saida: Bisarieh & A’aqbieh, Sarafand, Ghazieh, Zrariye, Kharayeb, Saida * Tyre: Jal AlBaher, Bazouriye, Borj Chemali, Maachouq, Borj Rahhal, Maarake, Chehabieh   Curfews monitoring by protection partners shows an increase in the number of villages enforcing curfews in most cazas.  Key results from the ARK survey confirms an important role of political parties in the South. It also shows that people in the South are much more dependent on Public Services. Quality of inter-community relations is more positive in the South  Partners’ interventions: More partners going towards “stabilization” project in the coming year. Area based programming being encouraged with plans for close follow up and enforcement through inter-agency and sector working groups.  **Bekaa**  Key results from the ARK surveys shows that intercommunity relations are particularly degrading and that tensions related to Competition for jobs at extremely high level in Bekaa. Military operations in Arsal impacted sense of security.  In terms of recent tension trends, the situation remains relatively stable after challenging first half of the year (protests, evictions, military operations, returns). Arsal is relatively calm and the situation also back to normal in Qaa. Partners report increased tensions in Hermel because of lack of livelihoods opportunities.  Ghazze fire actually showed good examples of solidarity with Lebanese hosting affected refugees.  The Social Stability Response in Bekaa is strong on soft activities with 15 dialogue/conflict prevention mechanisms set up this year. Over 2,000 youth engaged in community initiatives, 10,000 trained. 10 municipalities supported by MSAs – 30 municipalities supported in total but only half with tangible projects. 19 more in the pipeline.  **North**  TENSION MAPPING – NORTH AND AKKAR: there are stark differences between districts on the evolution of Syrian/Lebanese relations. Competition for jobs is the main source of tensions but political/cultural issues are important in most tense districts. Satisfaction with municipalities strong in the north but worryingly low in Akkar  Tension analysis/trend in Akkar. In Akkar, the percentage of people reporting never interacting with members of the other community rose from 22% to 55% between May and September 2017.  This is reflected in a more general sense of powerlessness in Akkar: 91% of respondents said they did nothing when experiencing assaults/incidents up from 49% in May. Confidence that Syrians and Lebanese can work together to solve their problems declined further by 18%. Refugees report that tensions in Bebnine have become prevalent. Rumours of forced return in Akkar have been circulating among Syrian refugees via WhatsApp. UNHCR and protection partners are trying to reassure refugees through Q&A and leaflet on return. Pressure on resources being the main reason communicated by municipalities issuing eviction threats. Other political reasons are to be considered. No evictions tool place. (eviction threats including in Bire,Kherbet Daoud, Hrar, Hayzouk, Halba, Miniara, Tak Abbas el Sharki, and Arca)  Tension analysis/trend in the north  **Zgharta & Bcharre**: Inter-community relationships are by far the most hostile with 82% judging them to be ‘very negative’ compared to a national average of 12%. In the North (and Bekaa), the percentage of people reporting that inter-community relationships worsened in the last three months doubled between May and September 2017, with great variation between district . Absolute majority in **Bcharry, Zgharta and Koura reported that situation have worsened**, while only few minorities reported the same in Minieh- Donieh and Tripoli. The percentage of people **in Zgharta** reporting that **the perception of safety have worsened** comparing three months before (as reported in September), is the highest on the national level, however in the north in general the respondents are feeling more safe.  **The most significant incident of the past three months, the Miziara murder, which impaired inter-community relationships across Lebanon.** The murder led to large protests demanding the evictions of Syrians followed by a municipal decision tightening the regulations of the Syrian presence. Most of the 650 Syrians living in Miziara left in the wake of requests by the municipality as well as direct pressure from young men of the village. Physical harassment of Syrians and destruction of their property have been reported, as well as intimidation of INGOs workers. **The incident also had strong ripple effects in surrounding areas of Zgharta, Bcharre and Donnieh.** Partners reported that the murder in Miziara raised tensions in surrounding areas. Number of municipalities issued decrees to increase restrictions on Syrian refugees and in many cases to evict them or those who are not sponsored by a Lebanese from the same town. **Media & social media monitoring:** Following the Miziara murder,hostile discourse against Syrian refugees proliferated on social media particularly on the Facebook page of the [Zgharta Ehden](https://www.facebook.com/Zgharta.Ehden.Daily/?hc_ref=ARQzolyUmBcdzHgCCvWbn0P-UPtiDaEQDfDduQboYAPn3xEGGM5HJZAXkhSL7ZgBVsU) local newspaper. Out of 297 tweets discussing the murder, 83% of tweets called for protests against Syrians, 35% explicitly advocated for the evictions of Syrians from Lebanon, while 18% demanded the execution of the alleged perpetrator.  Response mechanism in the north is studied on a case by case and involves the Inter-Agency and the Inter-sector  Close coordination between sectors primary between the social stability and the protection sectors to assess/predict the tension level and the protection needs.Advocacy and coordination with relevant authorities, mainly the governor.  North sost sector interventions major progress are related to conflict prevention mechanisms, and Youth initiatives. Significant gaps related to tangible Support to municipalities (only 8 municipalities reported having benefiting from completed BS projects- and 21 benefitted from completed CSPs). 2018 expression of Interest: 43 partners appealed under SoSt sector in the north for 2018 |
| **6** | **AOB** |
|  | This was the last meeting of the sector coordinator who thanked partners for the constant support and commitment to coordination over the past four years. UNDP explained to partners that recruitment is under process to find a suitable replacement, which means that there will be a transition period early 2018. However Hiba Douaihy is now fully on board on MOSA side so the coordination of the sector will be maintained at high standards. |

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| **Name** | **Organization** |
| Carina Aoun | ANERA |
| Bashayer Madi | Balamand University |
| Diana Gargano | Caritas Lebanon |
| Hiba Daher | CESVI |
| Paul Waller | DFID |
| Rami Shamma | DPNA |
| Diam Abou Diab | DRC |
| Solene de Montmarin | Expertise France |
| Haifa Allabadi | Fair Trade Lebanon |
| Ilina Slavova | International Alert |
| Zeina Khalaf | JICA |
| Abdallah Rabah | Mercy Corps |
| Fatima Cheikh | MOF |
| Nour El Korek | NRC |
| Rafael Panlilio | Positive Planet |
| Adrian Thompson | PU-AMI |
| Elsy Ghanameh | Save the Children |
| Elie Nassar | SIF |
| Daniele Bonifazi | Un Ponte Per |
| Hoda Bou-Onk | UN WOMEN |
| Jad Al-Halabi | UN WOMEN |
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