

ESSN Task Force Istanbul Minutes

Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome and introduction ▪ Action points from the previous meeting ▪ Updates on the ESSN and its implementation in Marmara region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ September Focus Group Discussions findings ✓ Call Center Announcements ✓ Disability Health Report Sensitisation ▪ Q&A with MoFLSS ▪ AOB 		
Date of meeting	12 November 2018 09:30 - 11:30	Location	ASAM Dolapdere Bostan Mahallesi, Küçük Odalar Sk. No:9, 34435 Beyoğlu/Istanbul
		Meeting Co-Chairs	WFP: Arzum Karasu TRC: Hanifi Kinaci

1. Action points:

Follow up issue:	Who will take action:	Deadline:
LLE report Turkish version to send to all partners	ESSN TF Co-Chairs	Once reviewing process is finished
Share FGD ESSN, livelihoods related findings to all partners after October TF	ESSN TF Co-Chairs	On going
New Action Points from the Meeting:		
ESSN Task Force invitation to include Arabic language	ESSN TF Co-Chairs	December 2018

2. Updates on the ESSN:

- The Co-Chairs World Food Programme (WFP) and Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) provided an update of the ESSN to date noting that as of 5 November 2018, a total of 479,577 applications (2,433,574 people) were registered; 3,327 applications were not assessed; 257,874 applications were deemed eligible and 218,376 applications were ineligible. 36.97% of the applications were registered by TRC Service Centres.
- 248,640 households (1,447,841 people) in total received ESSN assistance in October.
- 36,855 households (216,486 people) in Istanbul received the ESSN assistance.
- As of 10 November, 1,183 accounts were swept back nationwide: 672 uncollected cards (+3 months), 511 dormant accounts (+6 months)
- Severe Disability Top-Ups: 4,949 beneficiaries received Severe Disability Top-Ups in October (59% male, 41% female). While 96% of the total beneficiaries have more than 70% severe disability level based on their valid disability health reports; 54% of them have more than 90% severe disability with a documented valid disability health report.

▪ **Focus Group Discussions findings:**

- September Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) investigated the interest level of the refugee population in Turkey for Vocational trainings and employments assistance programs. The questionnaire for the month was comprised of three sections: 1) Current livelihood conditions; 2) Vocational trainings; 3) Employment assistance programs.
- Highlights:
 - Turkish employers` refusal to apply for work permits due to increased tax costs.
 - Females participants: Cultural norms and household responsibilities are the main barrier in participating in the labor market or attending vocational trainings.
 - Language barrier reported as the main barrier to accessing the labor market.
 - Winter is the best season for participating in vocational trainings; multiple locations in large urban areas to encourage high participation, and in the city center in smaller cities and rural areas.
 - Majority of female participants would prefer part-time jobs to be able to manage their household responsibilities. However, working in full-time jobs also welcome if employers provided day-care for their children

▪ **Disability Health Report Sensitization:**

Disability Health Report owners have been reminded via SMS to renew their report before the expiry date emphasizing the need to do so in order not to lose their ESSN entitlements.

▪ **TRC Outreach Activities:**

During October, TRC Istanbul Outreach Teams have visited 66 sites in five provinces out of 11. 20 advocacy visits were made to SASF's.

Upon an analysis conducted by TRC Data Verification Team, it was found out that there were families whose DHR details were still not entered into the system. To help those families receive their ESSN assistance again, Outreach Teams conducted an advocacy campaign through:

- Outbound calls to reach the SASFs and families (79 outbound calls)
- SASF visits (36 visits)
- Household visits (6 visits)

Note: 206 families were at risk of seeing their ESSN assistance cut. Their DHR details either expired or were not registered into the system. Outreach Team took action within 2 days to avoid the assistance being stopped.

▪ **TRC-WFP Monitoring and Evaluation Activities:**

In addition to the on-site monitoring in Istanbul, Bursa, Kocaeli and Kirklareli:

- Three CVME have been conducted in Tekirdag, Bursa and Balikesir
- Two FGDs sessions (One in Istanbul with a female group and one in Kirklareli with a male group).

Below are the findings specific to the Marmara Region:

- SASF's:
 - The majority of SASFs have finished updating the expiration dates of the Disability Health Reports on the Integrated System by 25 September.
 - Those who required additional staff to assist them with completing the archiving work were supported by TRC M&E Assistants.

3. Q&A with representative from MoFLSS: Mrs. Hilal Nur Ustun

- Following a previous request by the ESSN TF Co-Chairs on numbers related to HH visits, Mrs. Ustun shared data related to household verifications numbers – visits made by SASF officers' as of 9 November:
 - 149,086 people were deemed eligible after the household verification process
 - 99,548 were deemed not eligible after the household verification process
- For the district of Beyoglu (Istanbul) only; 712 households were deemed eligible and 668 not eligible.

Please note that Mrs. Ustun emphasized that the decision of being ineligible does not depend solely on the result gained from the household verification as the system does not allow the officers to see the reasons for which the ineligibility decision was taken. Reasons could be linked to many different factors.

- Regarding the SASF Allowance, Mrs Ustun stated that this allowance will be provided by SASFs who each have a quota of 5% out of the 14% most vulnerable population – not benefiting from the ESSN- to help. Any referral from external partners cannot be done as the entire procedure is under the entire responsibility of the SASF. Household visits will be part of the procedure; it is an obligatory process. At least two social workers conduct the household visits where they fill a form using a standard questionnaire. Based on their assessment, the board of trustees make the decision.
- The Ministry has shared the number of 23 000 Households potentially eligible for such allowance (please note that this number is an expected number) – Communicating the existence of this SASF Allowance to potential beneficiaries is not permitted. However, it is expected to be spread among the beneficiaries somehow through their own informal networks. The SASF allowance is most likely to be rolled out in December.
- The topic of work permit renewal for Syrians was raised, these were left unanswered though as Mrs. Ustun had no knowledge regarding these issues. However, participants were invited to email Mrs. Ustun in order to be referred to the right department within the Ministry.
- Child marriage issues was also raised asking to know more detail about the official procedure when faced with cases where a child was married to the head of household declaring the latter as his child. Mrs. Ustun confirmed that officer suspecting a case of child marriage should report the case for it to be investigated however in most cases the ESSN allowance - if existing - is not being stopped. Again, she also emphasizes the fact that some SASF can take measures such as stopping the aid should they be sure of the existence of a child marriage. But again, in terms of intervening as to separate the child from the family if the marriage was celebrated in Syria, Turkish authorities do not have the possibility to intervene they can do so if the marriage is celebrated in Turkey.
- The call center operator has access to ESSN history of the beneficiary on their screen. The applicant has the right to ask the reason of being ineligible by calling 168. The integrated system of the MoFLSS does not show the number of beneficiaries who have been excluded from ESSN because of their ID deactivation after the DGMM verification exercise in some provinces
- One NGO raised the potential need for an ESSN TF session in Arabic for the non-English speaking NGOs. It was agreed that creating a different and separate format would damage the core of the ESSN TF as it aims at getting all NGOs together to share their experiences and concerns and for each to benefit from one another.

4. Any Other Business:

- Arabic translation of LLE report is not in the agenda for the time being since it was requested from one NGO only and most of the Arabic speaking NGOs has one person at least who knows English or Turkish. However, this issue is to be reconsidered in 2019 if necessary.
- An Arabic speaking NGO requested the invitation to be also sent in Arabic.

ACTION POINT: ESSN Task Force invitation to include Arabic language in December 2018.

- Please remember to send any issues/challenges observed with as much detail as possible (location, date, etc.) to the ESSN TF focal points:
 - **WFP:** Arzum Karasu – email: arzum.karasu@gmail.com
 - **TRC:**
 - Ayman Sallawy Alhalb – email: ayman.alhalb@kizilay.org.tr
 - Hanifi Kinaci – email: hanifi.kinaci@kizilay.org.tr
- Please also note that since there will be other representative from the MoFLSS present at the next ESSN TF in provinces other than Istanbul such as Ankara (15 November) and Izmir (7 November), please feel free to share any questions and/or comments you may have with the ESSN TF Co-Chairs in advance.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on 10 December 2018 (TBC). The venue, time and agenda will be shared accordingly.

Attachments:

1. ESSN Task Force Istanbul Presentation
2. September 2018 Focus Group Discussion Report