

PROTECTION WORKING GROUP MEETING

MINUTES

3 MAY 2021

VENUE: Yerevan, ARMENIA (via MS Teams)

Participating organizations:

On 3 May 2021, 22 participants attended the twentieth meeting of the Protection Working Group (PWG).

Meeting agenda:

- Updates by Child Protection Sub-Working Group (SWG) on protection activities and issues
- Updates by Education SWG on protection activities and issues
- Updates by participating organizations on protection activities and issues
- Updates on Protection monitoring by UNHCR
- Presentation of the 5W-s dashboard by UNHCR
- Miscellaneous updates and issues.

Updates by Child Protection SWG on protection activities and issues:

The representative of the Child Protection SWG did not attend the meeting due to illness.

Updates by Education SWG on protection activities and issues:

Education SWG meeting was held in the last week of April. The participants provided updates on their current activities on assistance to refugee-like population. Local NGO "Step by Step" presented a joint project implemented with the financial support of the World Bank to capacitate early childhood development teachers to better respond to COVID-19 and to comply with the relevant restrictions, as well as to update their skills and methodologies on child-oriented and child-centred teaching. Upon the suggestion of the Education SWG members, the meetings of the SWG will be conducted on a monthly basis starting from May.

Updates from the participating organizations:

Save the Children International:

- A needs assessment has been launched on protection education needs of the children in refugee-like situation and their families. The assessment will be conducted in the city of Yerevan and five marzes of Armenia (Armavir, Ararat, Kotayk, Gegharkunik, and Syunik). The results of the assessment will be shared in mid-June and future possibilities for intervention might be discussed by that time (early recovery of the population in a refugee-like situation).
- Child-friendly spaces in Armavir, Goris, Tegh and Shinuhayr communities continue to operate. Every effort is undertaken to make these child-friendly spaces more useful for children and their parents. Constant contact is kept with beneficiaries to identify their additional needs so as to make the time spent in the child-friendly spaces more useful.
- Possibility of having supplementary classes in child-friendly spaces is being discussed, as discussions with school administrations and teachers revealed that children in refugee-like situation have some cognitive and educational skills development needs. Summertime will be used for organizing supplementary catch-up classes for school-aged children to make

them achieve their educational needs. The number of beneficiaries in Goris, Tegah and Shinuhayr will be approximately 300, while some 100-150 school-aged children will be engaged in Armavir. It is possible that the activity will be conducted in cooperation with UNICEF since they are also familiar with the relevant needs and plan to conduct activities offering supplementary classes to children in a refugee-like situation.

- Information on service providers in communities in Armenian will be shared with PWG members.

Mission Armenia NGO:

- 233 persons applied to Mission Armenia with issues related to health care, cash assistance, and first necessity items. Referrals were made to local self-government authorities, NGOs and polyclinics.
- 200 families received NFI assistance in the form of bed linens, disinfectant liquids, protective masks, school and hygiene items in Kotayk, Ararat, Gegharkunik and Lori marzes (126 in Kotayk, 69 in Ararat, 2 in Gegharkunik and 3 in Lori). Provision of NFI-s was financed by Save the Children, some clothing items were provided from the Mission Armenia NGO reserve fund.

Action Against Hunger:

Two main projects are implemented in cooperation with Mission Armenia NGO.

- The first project is funded by the French Government. The main objective of the project is to establish baby-friendly spaces within 4 community centres of Mission Armenia in Yerevan city (2), Ararat (1), and Kotayk (1) marzes. The project will support pregnant and lactating women and mothers of children under 2 years of age with a specific focus on breastfeeding, IYCF practices and psycho-social support. This support will be provided through experts, social workers, and psychologists of Mission Armenia. Currently, nutrition experts from Action Against Hunger and Mission Armenia are conducting trainings for Mission Armenia community support staff to build their capacity on the respective topics. In the future district nurses and policlinic staff will also be included in the trainings to broaden the project outreach. The second component of the project is food parcel distribution to 800 displaced families from NK. Food parcels will be distributed over 3 months. The first distribution will be conducted in mid or end of May, the second in June and the third in July. Food parcels will help displaced PLW and breastfeeding women maintain a more nutritious and balanced diet.
- The second project is funded by UNHCR where Mission Armenia is a leading agency. The project provides quick impact/fix support aimed at the improvement of the collective shelters where displaced people from NK are residing. In addition, hygiene items will be provided to the renovated collective shelters for maintaining better sanitation and hygienic conditions. Currently tenders have been announced for the repair of facilities in 5 shelters tenders and the bill of quantities are being defined in several more.

Médecins du Monde:

- A programme funded by the French Government has a component of distributing hygiene kits in several shelters. It was suggested to have a discussion with Action Against Hunger to prevent possible overlaps as both activities are funded by the same donor.
- Access to health care and support to health promotion is being implemented for displaced persons in Kotayk, Ararat, Armavir, and Yerevan with 2 implementing partners: the Armenian Association of Social Workers and the Woman Support Centre. Activities have been launched a month ago. One component is NFI provision (hygiene and cleaning kits, towels, and beddings), another component is the provision of medication vouchers and transportation to health facilities for the most vulnerable persons and for the services which are not provided for free by the government. The third component is access to information

on social benefits and free of charge services provided by the government. Leaflets and posters are produced for this component.

- Activities are conducted also in respect of GBV and MHPSS, particularly in the form of capacity building activities for local actors. In the upcoming week experts will visit Armenia for conducting an assessment. Later training on GBV will be conducted for partners and for some members of the coalition against violence against women.
- Some tensions between host communities and displaced persons were noted, which was not the case in January. Host communities believe that too much support is being provided to displaced persons. Médecins du Monde is targeting both host communities and displaced persons for assistance.

Mission East Armenia:

- Distribution of NFI-s is continued in villages and small towns of Syunik and NK to include persons who were not included in the first round of distribution. Distribution will start in the upcoming week through the partner Syunik Development NGO.

All for Armenia:

- More than 100 families in need who reached the helpline of the NGO, have already benefited from the programme of provision of food and hygiene items in Armenia and NK.
- A programme of long-term assistance covering more than 30 families for provision of food, hygiene items, and, more recently, also rental assistance is being implemented. 10 families are in Yerevan, 1 in Lori, 1 in Goris, 1 in Martakert, and 20 families are on the waiting list for identification of sponsors.
- A tech centre was opened in Goris providing free tech education to 14-18-year-old children in Goris from both local and refugee-like population from NK.
- Provision of home care access to families. A needs assessment is being conducted for better identification of the needs of families.

WHO:

- Referral pathways for SGBV cases were discussed and the recommendation is to come up with one holistic referral pathway/mechanism for all working groups. A suggestion was made by UNHCR to have such mechanisms not only for SGBV but all cases. A dashboard reflecting all these mechanisms/services might serve as a solution.

It was suggested to have ARCS and UNHCR updating on GBV cases and referral pathways as an agenda item for the next PWG meeting.

Updates on protection monitoring by UNHCR:

- UNHCR's second protection monitoring report covering the months of January-February 2021 was finalized and uploaded on UNHCR data portal. UNHCR shared the findings of the report with PWG members and addressed questions from the PWG members concerning persons with specific needs (determining criteria); tensions between the refugee-like and hosting populations which are reportedly rising in the last months due to shortage of resources, insufficiency of available assistance and accumulation of debts; and communities where children not attending school reside. The report and the presentation were shared with the PWG members in an email of 5 May 2021.

Presentation of the 5W-s dashboard by UNHCR:

- The 5W-s dashboard as of 30 April 2021 has been uploaded on the UNHCR data portal. The dashboard was presented to the PWG by UNHCR and was shared in an email of 5 May 2021.

Miscellaneous updates and issues:

- UNHCR has received a discussion paper on the way forward with respect to the Inter-Agency Response Plan after June 2021. The paper will be shared with the PWG members for comments, and an ad-hoc PWG meeting may be convened in mid-May to discuss the feedback to be provided by the PWG to the Coordination Steering Group.
- The next regular meeting of the PWG will be held on 1 June 2021.

UNHCR Armenia
May 2021