Cash-Based Responses/Technical Working Group (Northern Syria)

Meeting Minutes: Thursday 3rd December

Venue: CARE, Gaziantep

Coordinator: Jennifer McAteer cbr.twg@gmail.com

Attendees: CARE, CRS, PIN, GOAL, ACTED, NRC, World Vision, DCA, Bihar Relief, Shafak, Global Communities

Attachments: November market monitoring report, WoS Food Security Cash and Voucher maps, CBR-TWG Modality Decision Tree

Dropbox link: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/t44bfyivqctdtqt/AABf4QaVRt2EzXKPv2q8LTXea

Agenda points:
Welcome, introductions – thank you to CARE for hosting

1. Information sharing between members
   • Round table discussion
2. Reporting Update
3. Markets
   • Market Monitoring
   • Meta-analysis report
4. Sub Groups
   • CFW
   • BOP
5. Way forward in 2016
6. AOB
   • Training
   • IMO

Agenda points
Summary of discussion
Main take away/action points

Round table discussion of activities plus challenges

(organisation names are anonymised – if you’re happy to share names let Jen know)

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<th>Cash Grants</th>
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Three organisations discussed their cash distributions:

1. 2 organisations in membership are providing– unconditional cash in Kobani, Afrin and Aleppo – $100 per household, 400 households x 3 sets (one set per 6 months), 6 months in 2015 + 12 months in 2016
2. Using SMEB – 35,000 SYP one off grant, Northern Idleb – newly arrived households from Aleppo. Request for organisations to join.
3. 1,200 households, 600 in Idleb + 600 in Aleppo, SMEB - $90 – as price monitoring has now included whole SMEB this amount may increase.
The group discussed methodologies for distributing cash, including using money transfer agents with staff present to monitor the distribution. (Staff and money agents have split roles and responsibilities, enabling data protection, financial security and accountability.)

Vouchers
Two organisations discussed voucher distributions:

1. Cash vouchers for winterisation in Kobani in development
2. NFI voucher in Tel Rafaat – may be postponed

E card vouchers
Four organisations are considering or in planning/development stage of using e cards. One organisation has stopped discussions based on expensive commission rates.

Exchange rate between Syria Pound and USD
The group discussed the difficulty of managing voucher programmes with currency fluctuations and considered options for improving vendor payment management.

Key issues raised include:
- Vendors are paid in dollars – fluctuations of exchange rate $ / SYP
- Agreeing set days to reimburse vendors may prevent disagreements on XE rate
- Donor compliance when not using official exchange rates
- Price fixing in dollars – may cause difficulty for beneficiaries in an unfamiliar currency; may push the market artificially towards USD including for members of the community not included in the programme. It was noted that staff salaries and local procurement are paid in dollars therefore there is already a level of input in the local economy in dollars.
- Free market vs. socialist economic models

Members noted that regular monitoring of intervention markets and non-intervention markets (source and local) as well as a variety of vendors to encourage competition. Amending voucher amounts depending on this data prevents the need for price fixing.

Members noted donors prefer the use of vouchers, however Danish donors (DANIDA) are keen on using cash.
### Coordination and overlap of distributions
Members requested more coordination during new emergency/rapid distributions of CBR activities. CBR-TWG coordinator agreed to facilitate. Coordination will be for practical purposes only and will not supersede coordination by clusters therefore info sent to CBR-TWG on cash and voucher activities only, not all distribution activities.

Members noted an online interactive tool provided by the CCCM cluster for reporting movement and response.

| Jen to send email informing all members of this decision; |
| Members who haven’t submitted data requested to do so. |

### Reporting update
Following the data submitted by members a rough map has been drawn up displaying the number beneficiaries per district who have received cash or voucher distributions. Data has not been received by some members; accuracy will be improved if all members can submit data. In the meantime further efforts are being made to disaggregate this data from 4Ws.

The WoS FS Cluster have developed a map showing cash and voucher distributions for food basket and livelihood programmes. See attached.

| Members who haven’t submitted data requested to do so. |

### Market monitoring update
**November report** and dataset is available - see attached.

**Key points include:**

**Methodology**
- Inclusion of fresh vegetables finalised the whole SMEB
- Inclusion of ar-Raqqa is the first fully ISIL controlled area
- 8 winter NFIs were included

**Results**
- Exchange rate with USD significantly increased to 377 SYP/USD
- Vegetables are consistently priced
- Main price changes include eggs, tea, tomato paste, soap and government petrol
- Main shortages in kerosene and government diesel
- Restocking time remains consistently 1 day in most governorates except ar-Raqqa where restock is 5-10 days
- Largest variations in winter NFI prices are seen in mattresses and winter blankets.

**Meta-analysis**
In December price monitoring won’t take place to enable REACH to concentrate on analysis data from the last 6 months to one year. Members discussed analysis they would like to see reflected in this report.

**Suggestions include:**
- Sub district level analysis and comparisons where there is consistent data

| Jen to feedback to REACH |
- Correlation of availability and price
- Overlay with security and IDP movements
- Price index

The report will be produced by Jan 15

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<th>Sub groups</th>
<th>CFW sub group met 3.12.2015</th>
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<td>Discussed current CFW activities of members in Hasakeh, Aleppo and Idleb</td>
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<td>Setting wage rates – some discrepancy between members in same governorates so method for harmonising is required</td>
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<td>Seasonal considerations of wage rate</td>
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<td>Also required to harmonise no. days/month</td>
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**Actions**
- Members finalising PDMs soon – will analyse and collate feedback on wage rates
- Collate evidence of wage rates from local councils
- Define process for updating systematically

**Basic Operations sub group**
- Finalised modality decision tree – see attached. Includes links to useful documents to support programme planning and donor advocacy.
- Vendor guidelines drafted and in the process of review.

**Next Steps**
- This is the last meeting of 2015. Coordinator proposed a workshop in Feb 2016 to determine the priorities and TOR for the group next year. Members agreed.

Survey will be sent out for an end of year review, including reviewing feedback from mid-year review.

**AOB**

**Training**
Training planned in December however one facilitator is now unfortunately unavailable at this time. Members agreed timing at the end of year is difficult. Group agreed to postpone training until Jan 2016.

**IMO**
IMO recruitment is ongoing, a candidate has been identified.

**Next meeting: January, Antakya.** Agenda to follow – will include roundtable sharing of project outlines and challenges. Suggestions for agenda items welcome.