CBR-TWG Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2016
NRC Office, Gaziantep

Agenda items
1. Introductions and agenda overview
2. Next month’s meeting & Coordinator update
3. Round table updates – 3 key initiatives or challenges
4. 4Ws update and planning
5. Sub-groups update
6. Market Monitoring update
7. AOB, including:
   a. Currency & Exchange rates

Introduction: Points 1 and 2
Attendance;
NRC, Bihar, Ihsan, GOAL, REACH, OCHA, PIN, WV, Merch Corps, DCA, ACTED, MC, NRC, Ihsan, Save, IRC, Bonia, Big Heart

Coordinator update:
- Previous candidate did not work out
- Requested support from Cash Clap roster, which was approved. Currently expecting soon someone for a short term cover.
- Save have re-advertised the position – everyone please share the advertisement!

Next month’s meeting: Save the Children will chair, in Antakya. Meeting will be after Eid, details will be sent out early July.

Organizational updates
#1
- Completed cash project in Azaz, CFW for teachers
- They have a new partner in Idleb for emergency response, will work to build in cash for end of Q3, Dana area.

#2
- In operation now rural Ariha, 10 villages, about 800 cash for work beneficiaries, 140 unconditional cash beneficiaries. Each round is for 3 months transfer, they’re going multiple rounds. CFW for infrastructure in villages (public works). Looking for another partner / agency to extend the project
  o UN reclassifying areas by colors, this is a “green” area
  o CFW rates – from previous price monitoring, set at $10 per day for unskilled, $11 for skilled. Also worked with LC to help determine rate based on local rates, but they negotiated a bit
- Unconditional cash for female-headed households and child-headed households. Rate based on SMEB.
  - Challenge: security situation there is varying, they’re worried about market capacity for the CFW areas.

#3
- CFW with #2 implementing
  - Setting up rapid response mechanism for Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) for new arrivals, with another partner, aiming for July – February, for up to 8200 households. Northern Hama, Idleb, Western rural Aleppo. Transfer value will be based on SMEB plus about 20%.
  - Implementing agricultural input vouchers
  - Fresh food vouchers, for infants hhs, 2000 hh’s for 4 months, Saraqeb, Zirbe – still being planned, likely biweekly. Using separate list of items targeting infants.

#4
- Partner with #9 for unconditional cash, in 5th month now, about 1000 hh, $100 per month for 5 months, then change hh’s. Northern Aleppo, Kobani & Afrin, western rural Aleppo Daarat Azza, Atareb. Using general vulnerability criteria, with focus on disability.

#5
- Cash for work: within a shelter project, building rehabilitation, in Atareb & Daarat Azza
  - Small grants for 30 households, started pilot and assessing difficulties, one-time funding for pilot projects (LLH projects). In Aleppo City, $1000 per hh about (depends on the project). From a private donor, then will do follow up and plan to scale
  - Thinking of scaling up to a loans-based project, small business credit instead of grants.

Note: Aga Khan Foundation / First Microfinance Institution-Syria working in Syria since 2008, currently still in Aleppo, Latakia, Homs.

#6
- Currently conducting assessments for CFW projects in Saraqeb, Ariha, Idleb. Daily rate $10, 3 months. This project sits in their cash team.
  - Also implementing in Dana & Azaz, & planning Darkoush. Same rate, though this sits in their Livelihoods team.
  - Unconditional cash, looking at Darkoush, speaking with LCs and assessments, want to begin distribution in mid-July. 1,000 households one-time distribution. Will use SMEB to guide transfer value.
  - Starting microenterprise in Dana, Azaz, Darkoush, grants up to 1000 USD, just recruiting now.

#7
- Currently doing agricultural input vouchers, in the shopping period now
  - Preparing conditional shelter cash grants (shelter rehab), household repair. Concern is pricing on hh repair, working with Shelter Cluster 7 other partners to resolve issues & figure out how to set prices.
#1 doing this in the South, #15 and one other partner (not attended) also doing shelter rehab

8
- Continuing vouchers in Aleppo, and in kind, for food security. Also adding bread vouchers
- Challenge: getting smaller vendors into program due to cash flow capacity, smaller & more local vendors. Trying vouchers now as “points” instead of currency, with $1 = 1 point. Vendors post rates & prices in shop
- E-vouchers: Closing out relationship with current e-voucher provider (redrose)
  - Considering another e-voucher provider, in Izmir they contract vendors. They’ll do a presentation for them next week. Smartphone based system, on and offline capacity,
  - Mastercard also interested in working in Syria, but having challenges with registration and lack of banking system

9
- Working with #4, no new update

10
- Still planning cash programming but have not yet begun

11
- Food vouchers, west Aleppo, Idleb, 3 month cycles, planning now cycle now, to 5600 hh (up from 4900). Currently as SYP & decided to keep it there. Price monitoring not shoeing dramatic changes but vendors wanting to change to USD
- CFW, in Aleppo City through a partner, western Aleppo & northern Idleb. Matching food vouchers and CFW cycles as much as possible, looking to launch another 3 month, here reducing beneficiaries to 2100 for CFW. Challenge is donor funding consistency across cycles. They’re paying $3.5 per day (less than others) - trying to tie it to local wage market as much as possible (worried about inflation). Paying in USD cash
  - Wage may depend on industry
  - Also total monthly wage may be similar, as their CFW participants are working more days than some other orgs.
- Cash grants, have $90 USD grants available, about 3500, targeting new arrivals, looking to continue discussing how to decide whether cash is acceptable and when to trigger
- Challenge: price disparity b/t aleppo city (staying similar) & idleb (slow increase), thinking about differentiating assistance based on regional disparities
- Challenge: USD liquidity through hawalas has been a problem, low availability of dollars

OCHA - #12
- Just finalized Aleppo preparedness plan, was shared around, to prepare for closure of Castello road
- Currently doing new capacity assessments for new partners, any organization interested should contact OCHA
#13
- Cash grants to respond in Azaz
- 3000 value vouchers for IDPs in Aleppo, Idlab
- Agriculture projects in Armanaz – CFW for wheat farms rehab & road maintenance. Support farmers with wheat seeds, purchased locally, vouchers for inputs
- Starting new small biz training, hasekeh, idleb for 300 beneficiaries, & will support cash grants

#14
- Small business program in Aleppo City, cash modality & training
- Shelter rehab vouchers, Aleppo City
- Planning cash emergency response, to begin soon

#15
- Continuing vouchers for food, agriculture support, small business, shelter rehabilitation. Direct implementation in northern Idleb (Harim district, parts of Jisr ar Shugur district), Maaret Tamsrin area
- E-vouchers: in final stages of procuring an e-voucher system for a pilot, done a global tender and using potential new suppliers to the Syria NGO context.
- Planning a survey to assess potential negative impacts on markets / non-beneficiaries (eg, inflation) of switching to USD vs SYP. Conducted along with IRC (#6). Will share the survey tool

4Ws update
- May 4W report
  - 7 partners submitted data
  - Mostly Idleb & Aleppo, one project in Raqqa
  - Food Security, Livelihoods, and multi-purpose cash were the most common sectors
  - Currently no overlaps identified among NGOs who submitted, by sector & sub-district
- June 4W planning
  - Next round will cover month of June
  - **Data due July 15th**
  - Feedback: Still some empty columns that limit the analysis. **Partners should fill in all columns, especially all columns in red text.** Any questions to Hosam (cbr.twg@gmail.com)

Market Monitoring – REACH Update
- May monitoring report is out
  - **Dataset:** [http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_syr_dataset_marketmonitoring_may2016_0.xlsx](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_syr_dataset_marketmonitoring_may2016_0.xlsx)
8 partners participated, covering 31 sub-districts – increase over the previous month but still less than the peak around late 2015

- All new partners interested please contact Hosam (cbr.twg@gmail.com) and REACH Paul NEUMAN <paul.neuman@reach-initiative.org>

- Exchange rate went up dramatically, 635 SYP/USD median, 23% since April. However this does not account for volatility during / after data collection period
- Increases: Tomato paste, eggs big increases, chicken small increase, but in general SYP prices went up for key commodities
  - Bread stayed mostly the same, fresh veggies went down
- Fuel prices: note for interpretation, some sub-districts have subsidized fuel and others don’t, so variability is quite high
- Availability: Sugar had most reported shortages (9 sub-districts, mostly in hasakah & raqqa, mostly along northern Turkish border). Unclear why.
- Chicken more available than in previous months
- Most expensive 87000 SYP (DEZ city, non-beseiged); least expensive complete: armanaz 54,000 SYP
- Only had 5 complete SMEBs from 31 sub-districts, mostly from sugar shortage & water trucking issues

Next round: missing some key areas, eg Aleppo City, southern Idleb no longer covered though had been in the past

- All interested new partners interested please contact Hosam (cbr.twg@gmail.com) and REACH, Paul NEUMAN <paul.neuman@reach-initiative.org>

Exchange rates note: usually there’s not that much variation between sub-districts, this time there was unusual volatility so REACH will continue to monitor this and see if this continues the next month. This may be just due to unusual volatility of rates in late May

Questions & updates:
- Any analysis of prices over time, overlaid on conflict incidents? Overall, REACH has noticed that markets have been relatively resilient, but hard to do trends analysis due to variation in sub-districts covered over time.
- Trends analysis was done for January and next 6-month trends report is being planned now for Jan-June 2016
- REACH would like to do a revamp of training, update methodology, and update new partners

Cash Feasibility study:
- South Syria one to complement N Syria & fill gaps

Attachments to these minutes:
- Dropbox link for new members
- CFW calculator tool
- Modality decision flowchart
- USD/SYP study tool from GOAL
- 4W May presentation and Blank Reporting Form
- Northern Syria cash feasibility study