

Meeting on Whole of Syria (WoS) Coordination Arrangements for Education

12 February 2015, Amman, Jordan

Meeting Notes

23 participants representing 13 education partners attended the meeting on the WoS Coordination Arrangements for Education 12th February 2015 in Amman. 9 members representing 7 education partners from Gaziantep joined the meeting via Skype (see final participant list).

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the WoS coordination arrangement for the education sector (including identification of a co-lead at the WoS Focal Point/FP level), to provide updates on the developments over the recent months in the different Hubs, and to identify red flags, issues of concern and common work modalities.

1. WoS coordination structure

UNICEF presented the current WoS education structure and highlighted the need of selecting a co-lead for the sector at the WoS level, as requested by OCHA. It was noted that, although the timeline has been very tight, several discussions were held by the Hubs in Damascus and Gaziantep to discuss, within their respective education sector working groups, the WoS architecture (including location and co-lead at the WoS level).

The Damascus Hub confirmed that UNICEF and the Syria MoE are leading the education sector and, after consultation at the Hub level, there were no expression of interest (Eol) from any of the education partners to become co-lead for the WoS education FP.

At the Gaziantep Hub level, 4 NGOs submitted their Eol to become WoS co-lead FP: Syria Relief Network, Shafak, Syria Education Commission and Ehsan. A process to present the Eol was in place and coordinated by the NGO Forum in Turkey. However, the Gaziantep Hub noted that there has been lack of clarity/understanding on the process itself as some NGOs, especially the Syrian NGOs, were not fully aware of it. In addition, it was not clear if and how the SIRF (Syrian INGO Regional Forum) was involved in this process. UNICEF proposed to bring this issue to the attention of the NGO forum in Turkey as it seemed that there was a breach in the communication flow at different levels.

At the Amman Hub level there was no submission of Eol because it is currently not active.

Save the Children confirmed that, at the regional level, the SIRF did communicate to its members about the Eol process and they presented their candidature on the basis of their experience in the sector, the advisory and strategic role they exercise at the Global Cluster level (they co-lead with UNICEF the Global Education Cluster) and the resources they can mobilize.

Some other partners interested in the co-leadership FP role confirmed that they have the necessary regional level experience and that they are heavily involved in provision of education services inside Syria. They also expressed concerns on the Eol process.

Others proposed a different WoS Architecture, drawing from the lessons learned at the Gaziantep Hub level, where there were difficulties in identifying a co-lead for the Education Working Group. The solution was found by creating a Strategic Advisory Group to support the education lead (Save the Children). Although an interesting solution, this was not considered a viable option to fit within the WoS architecture in terms of logistical and other issues (where the Advisory Group will sit, how to operationalize it, how it would fit in the current OCHA WoS structure, etc.).

A consensus was reached to have Save the Children act as the WoS education co-lead Focal Point with the caveat that, after 6 months, this arrangement can be reviewed.

2. Wos Education FP Term of Reference (ToR)

A ToR for the WoS Education FP was shared. UNICEF emphasized that the shared ToR are generic and need to be made sector-specific. Few comments (below) were made:

- Needs assessment and analysis: More clarity was requested on the ‘vulnerability framework for the WoS approach’. Clarifications were made, as this paragraph in the ToR refers to the involvement in assessments such as the MSNA and the AoO.
- Development and application of standards in support of the WoS approach: A request was made to ensure that the ToR refer to the INEE MS. This was confirmed.

Partners agreed to send additional comments to the ToR to the WoS FP by end of February.

3. WoS communication structure

Participants agreed on the need of a shared list of events and calendars for the sector to be created, as well as the urgent need of a WoS meeting to be convened soon to bring all partners together and start building a wider vision for Syria. Istanbul was the suggested location as Beirut is not the ideal location for Syrian NGOs. Amman remains also a good location for future meetings and workshops. Partners agreed to have this meeting in early April in Istanbul; the date was to be further explored and communicated. Partners were encouraged to suggest and contribute to the agenda to be drafted at a later stage.

4. Presentations from the Hubs

Damascus Hub:

- By end of 2014, 3.1 mil children have been reached by the Education Sector in Damascus.
- 24 partners provide education interventions out of 42 organizations (24 NNGOs, 9 INGOs, 5 UN, 3 Govt) attending the education sector meetings.
- The Hub has a dedicated coordinator and IM Officer in Damascus and 3 Focal Points in Homs, Tartous and Hassakeh.
- The Education Sector Analysis is ongoing with a finalized quantitative analysis of EMIS data (which has informed the 2015 HNO) and a qualitative analysis to be conducted in 2015.

- Key priorities for 2015:
 - Scaling up responses through a joint response plan within 2015 SRP.
 - Rolling out capacity building for partners on emergencies, preparedness and contingency planning, information management and principles of humanitarian response.

Gaziantep Hub:

- 18 organizations are active sector members.
- As of 31 December 2014, more than 512,000 children and education personnel have been reached through the rehabilitation of schools and temporary learning spaces (TLS), the provision of teaching and learning materials, psycho- social well-being activities, the provision of incentives to teaching staff and educational personnel and the facilitation of school transportation to and from hard-to-reach and insecure areas
- A joint-agency education sector assessment is being implemented and is due to be launched in in May, 2015.
 - EWG has set up an Assessment Task Force made up of 16 NGOs and NGO networks, 75% are Syrian, working in most areas under opposition control.
 - The assessment will be carried out by agencies in the Task Force. Once the information is collected, the analysis will be led by a UNICEF subject-specialist in collaboration with the Task Force, EWG and other relevant WGs.
- Partners indicated that many NGOs do not share their information on the 4W matrix because of security concerns and lack of technical capacity. It was suggested to have regular workshops to build the IM capacity of partners.
- Common challenges highlighted by Syria Relief Network were related to the payment of teachers in non-government controlled areas and distribution of supplies in hard to reach areas.
- SEC is supporting 140 schools with provision of books and teachers' incentives.

Amman Hub:

- Amman Hub is not active yet as no cross border (XB) interventions have been made in education.
- AoO, OCHA Governorates profiles and MSNA provide data for Dara'a and Quneitra governorates. Dara'a and Quneitra have experience heavy fighting and school disruption; children are not going to schools because of transportation and fees, in addition to the fact that school are in urgent need of rehabilitation. There are 240,000 children (3-17 year) in need of humanitarian assistance in these two governorates.
- A school assessment was done by the Humanitarian Monitoring Group and shared by OCHA.
- UNICEF presented a project sheet for the 2015 Syria SRP that looks at:
 - School supplies and back-to-learning campaigns
 - School rehabilitations
 - Professional development for teachers and education personnel on pedagogical skills and INEE MS
 - Provision of non-formal and alternative learning, including e-learning
- UNICEF is looking forward to discuss/engage with interested partners to start XB education intervention from Jordan.

- Olive Branch, a Syria based NGO, confirmed that they are involved in education in Dara'a and Quneitra by supporting 9 schools and transportation of students to schools. In 2015 they are planning to establish 10 new schools in Dara'a.
- Rabit El Quran Community is doing interventions in Dara'a in different areas including tertiary education, school education, distance education, catch-up classes, vocational trainings, scholarship. This organization is also providing support in the North of Syria.

5. Information sharing

The Information Management structure was briefly discussed with a presentation done by UNICEF on the different level of coordination and interactions between the Strategic Steering Group (SSG), the Inter-Sector/Cluster Coordination Group (ISCC) and the Syria Information Management and Assessments Working Group (SIMAWG) together with the 4Ws for Education that was presented by OCHA colleagues. The new 4W is very similar to what the Damascus and Gaziantep Hubs are currently using. Only few fields were updated:

- Communities with new locations and P. Codes, also added the new list of the neighborhoods P. Codes.
- Strategic Response Plan (SRP 2015) indicators and activities.

It was suggested to look at the new tool and harmonize it with what the Damascus and Gaziantep Hub are using to report on programmatic results.

Due to lack of time, the REACH representative could not present the work on the AoO and the MSNA. A presentation is attached for easy of reference.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Agenda of the meeting.
2. Presentation by Damascus Hub.
3. Presentation by Gaziantep Hub.
4. Presentation on IM structure by UNICEF.
5. Presentation on 4W by OCHA.
6. Presentation on AoO and MSNA by REACH.
7. 4W Education Template.
8. WoS Education Architecture.