

Minutes of the Education Cluster Meeting
TUESDAY 08th September, 2009
11.00am – 12.30pm

The meeting agenda was as follows:

1. Briefing from MoEHE on Back to School
2. Briefing from UNRWA on Back to School
3. NGOs intervention
4. CAP projects
5. Education sector contingency plan
6. AOB

1. Introduction:

- a. In attendance: Ministry of education, UNRWA, OCHA, UNESCO, UNDP, UNIFEM, TAMER Institute, UNICEF, Azhar University and International Relief for the first time.
- b. Note: UNICEF Gaza office took the co-lead of Cluster Coordinator at this meeting as the Coordinator Save the Children Gaza was s in Ramallah participating in the CAP national workshop organized by OCHA.

2. MoEHE briefing:

Mr. Noman El Sharif, Director General of Public relations at Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) briefed the participants about the situation at the schools:

- MoEHE issued a press release to call attention to the sever shortage of stationary in the local market. The press release was circulated to the UN and International Agencies.
- There is lack of text books even though the school started two weeks ago on 23rd August. One hundred and fifty (150) out of 187 titles for the first term are already printed and distributed. Priority was given to grades 1 to 4.
- Classrooms are overcrowded due to the damage caused during Cast Lead (157 schools were partially damaged and 7 totally damaged). There are 55-60 students in some classes.
- UNICEF distributed educational aids such as Math and Science teaching kits in addition to 30,000 school bags for students in grades 1-2 (about 16,000 students were enrolled in grade 1)

Discussions:

- OCHA commented that MoEHE was late in issuing the press release while the situation on the ground was predicting the shortage of the stationary. According to OCHA, the private sector was allowed to bring two truck loads of stationary at the beginning of the academic year while 154 truck loads were allowed by the Israelis last year.

3. UNRWA:

- About 25,000 new students enrolled in UNRWA schools for this year 2009-2010 and about 18,600 students transferred from grade 9 at UNRWA to grade 10 at governmental schools.
- UNRWA distributed copy books to students as each one will receive 33 copybooks and regular students stationary.
- 38% of UNRWA students out of a total 15,800 students failed in the compensation unified exams conducted in the summer and will not be transferred to the next grades. This will make the final result for UNRWA students for the year 2008-2009 as follows:
 - a. 92% of UNRWA students passed the final exams

- b. 8% of UNRWA failed
- UNRWA took certain measures to improve the quality of education and students' learning achievements by designating special classes for all grades with low achievement students (0-30%).
 - They also designated separate classes for students two years or more who are at higher levels than their fellow classmates.
 - Teacher assistants were employed to teach Maths and Arabic language for students in grades 3 and 4 and English Language for grades from 1-4
 - UNRWA was permitted to use three school premises from MoEHE and allowed to function as a second shift for UNRWA students.
 - Due to the lack of classrooms and problem of over-crowdedness, UNRWA established one school in Nuseirat (Nuseirat Elementary Boys C) with caravans. All classrooms are caravans. This increased the number of schools functioning in caravans to four in Gaza strip; Mawasi Rafah Boys and Girls, Moawayah Bin Abi Sufian in Beit Lahia and Nuseirat Elementary Boys C.

4. NGOs briefing:

- Relief International is studying a project for providing school bags and stationary
- The Islamic Bank is, as well, working with MoEHE to provide school bags.

5. CAP presentation:

- Participants were briefed about the CAP process and deadlines.
- CAP power point presentation used by OCHA in the Gaza district workshop was also presented and will be circulated with the minutes.
- It was agreed that the project templates would be circulated as a soft copy even though a hardcopy was delivered to the participants.

6. Education sector contingency plan:

- Education sector contingency planning was not covered due to the shortage of time.
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7. Action Points:

- Participants discussed the cluster role in advocating for the shortage of stationary and raised the issue again if the cluster can issue a press release.
- It was agreed that the Cluster prepare a fact sheet about the education status in Gaza. We agreed that D. Mazen write about higher education, UNESCO about vocational and Technical training. UNICEF and MoEHE will write about schools and Save the Children will write about the ECD (Mona from Save the children).

8. Next meeting:

- It was agreed to be after the feast because of the CAP projects.
- It will be Monday 28th September, 2009. at 11.00am

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UNICEF