

Shelter / NFI / CCCM Bhamo Cluster Meeting Minutes

NFI Technical Meeting

Friday, May 30, 2014

UNHCR Office, Bhamo

Attendees: KMSS-BMO, KBC, Metta, UNHCR, SI, UNICEF WaSH, Shalom & Cesvi

(Advanced) notification sent that not attending meeting: None

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action / Actor / Date
Introductions	<p>Cluster Coordinator for Kachin and Northern Shan State (CCK) introduced <i>this</i> NFI technical meeting. Cluster has tried to organise this meeting for few months as all members agreed with its necessity but for several reasons it could not be done. CCK underlined he was happy to see that all actors involved in NFI (in the area) were present.</p> <p>Meeting had three main objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise the standard NFI kit agreed upon by the cluster members in 2013 2. Design a standard winterization kit 3. Discuss the need to move towards better targeted NFI distributions as opposed to large systematic distributions (so-called “blanket” distribution). Regular large distributions of NFI in the past emergency period, and if no real need remains, can have serious negative impacts, such as increasing dependence of IDPs or creating tensions between IDPs and host population. This is not something typical to Kachin and Northern Shan State, but has been witnessed in countless cases in other humanitarian responses around the world. <p>After a round of self introduction, including the national Cluster Coordinator (CC) visiting from Yangon, the meeting started.</p>	

<p>NFI Core Kits</p>	<p>Introducing the discussion on revision of the 2013 standard NFI kit, CCK insisted that this would not be solely decided by the Cluster Lead but by the Cluster members active in the field. The Cluster will help to support/facilitate discussion and relay the decisions to central level. CCK also specified that <i>this</i> Cluster was in charge only of the NFI core items since August 2013, no longer of the hygiene Kits (HK) and/or sanitary kits (SK). The responsibility for these two NFIs was with the WaSH Cluster.</p> <p>Following this introduction the discussion started between participants on the content of the NFI Core Kit. Some important points raised and discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to take better into consideration the protracted nature of the situation, meaning that many IDPs have now been displaced since two-three years and therefore might not need the same items. • At the same time, there are still some fresh emergencies happening and new displacements. • Therefore, group considered the idea of having two sets of standardized kits, to be better adapted to the situation, one for the emergency and one for the IDPs in a protracted setting. • From the existing standard kit, the two main items that are still regularly requested from people in the camps are tarpaulin (used to do basic repairs on walls and/or roofs) or to protect kitchens during the rainy season, and floor mat to protect from the cold coming from the floor. • Standard size of family that should be used was discussed. Everyone agreed that this could never be perfect and fit all situations, but that some sort of agreed “typical family size” was necessary. • KMSS-BMO suggested that the kit should be made larger to fit the big families and proposed to put at seven people per family. UNHCR, Cluster and SI said based on available data on average the family size in the camps in Kachin and Northern Shan States is actually quite small, with 4.2 members on average across the board and a large percentage of families being in the 3-4 range, even though it is true some are larger than five members. CCK wondered if then it would be relevant to actually reduce the size of the kit to match only three family members per family, which would allow distributing two kits to larger families? Overall, it was decided that as there was no perfect solutions, keeping it at 5 persons/family was probably the most relevant. 	
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	<p>CCK concluded on this subject by reminding members that it was also an area where the camp management can/should play a role, meaning being close enough to the community to support better delivery of assistance once it reaches the camp.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The utility of a pillow was mentioned by IDPs in many cases. This relates as much to culture aspects as to comfort. IDPs consider putting their head directly on the mattress/floor or using a bundle of clothes (instead of a pillow) as undignified. • Thicker mosquito net than currently distributed would increase protection from mosquito (current ones tends to tear easily and get holes) and could also have an advantage in terms of privacy. <p>Then the UNHCR BMO Head of field Office provided explanation on how the UNHCR plans NFI distributions.</p> <p>Agreed based on this discussion that CCK would circulate a draft for both mentioned kits (for IDPs settled in the same camps for a long time and for emergency responses) for comments. A second meeting would be called end of June in order for all to reflect on it and have the opportunity to discuss internally (within agencies). In-between a similar meeting will take place in MTY and discussed at the next Cluster meeting in NS for everyone/all involved to have a say. If the final decision is made to submit two kits, the group will need to agree on a definition of when the situation becomes protracted.</p>	<p><u>Action point:</u> CCK to circulate a table summarizing the items mentioned during the discussion by mid-June.</p> <p><u>Action point:</u> All Cluster members to discuss the draft standard kit internally and provide feedback ahead of next meeting.</p>
<p>Winter Items</p>	<p>As discussed in several previous meetings, there was a need to design a standard kit for winterization items, in order to rationalize the assistance and support advocacy to donors. However, it was recognized that it was a difficult task as these items are often linked to size and sex unlike most of the standard core kit items. In 2013 the following items were distributed by various partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick jacket/sweater; • Hat; • Blankets (thick and normal); • Socks; • Night warm clothes for elderly; • Type of thick towels for women to protect their heads and neck; • Hats for men; • Mats (normal and thick). 	

During the discussion the following main points were raised:

- There is a need when it comes to mattresses and blankets to differentiate in recording between “normal” (the ones in the standard NFI kit) and “thick” (needed as winterization item). Indeed, due to the weather, and mainly in cold areas, it is used / viewed as two different kinds of items.
- There is a need to decide on different areas of needs for winterization items to prioritise. Even though the temperature can get quite cold everywhere in Kachin and Northern Shan States, the difference remains important between mountainous areas such as Border 6 and 8 (where for weeks it can be 0 Celsius) and others such as MTY where the temperature rarely gets under 10, and where IDPs also have better access to markets if they need additional items.

A final agreement should be reached during the next meeting, but tentatively the following three categories were drafted:

- -Very cold and/or no access to winterization items: Chipwi-Pang Wa, Border 6 and 8, Putao, Kutkai;
- -Medium category: Laiza to Ma Ja Yang, Muse;
- -Lesser priority: Shwegyin, MTY & BMO.

(TO BE NOTED that some areas such as Hpar Kant have not yet been included)

CCK indicated that a similar categorization had already been done by the Cluster Lead as part of submitting a proposal to UNIQLO, a Japanese clothing brand who mentioned they might be interested in supporting winterization items through in-kind donations. The categories of priority defined by the Cluster Lead as part of the proposal were very similar to the ones mentioned during this meeting.

-There is a need to better target more vulnerable population, such as young kids and elderly. CC mentioned that one option could be to approach some manufacturers. Generally speaking, to approach manufacturers and/or donor, clear idea of needs, coming from the field, is central, so a meeting such as this is very helpful in terms of feeding information through.

-As a general comment, KBC encouraged each agency to carry-out a more specific assessment before delivering winter items to a camp. Indeed, the gap might not be as large as it appears through data because “quite a lot” of winter items were provided last year directly from China

	<p>with little recording. The group agreed that this should not impact too much clothing distributions as it can be accepted that distributing two years in a row would not be overlapping as having two sets per person is useful for hygiene, etc. However, it could be more important when it comes to other items. Generally speaking, the group underlined that when it comes to winter items only general indication/steer can be provided as a standard by the Cluster and that case by case assessments by implementing agencies/providers before distributions would be very important.</p>	
<p>Change from Blanket Distribution to Targeted</p>	<p>There are two elements in this idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to better target NFI distributions to the needs rather than carrying out regular blanket distributions that might end up doing more harm than good; ○ Should we consider moving from material assistance to another form (cash or voucher) of support? <p>Metta explained about the voucher system they implement in Laiza, and consider extending to the BMO area. They provide vouchers for a certain amount that IDP can use in designated shops in town. There are specific criteria for the designated shop, such as capacity to provide in sufficient quantity. CCK raised his concern that it might create tensions between the shops that are chosen to be part of the program (thus receiving extra business) versus others. Metta has explained clearly their criteria to the shops and so far such tensions have not been noticed. Metta encouraged other actors to move to this voucher system which offers more choices to IDPs for their NFIs and give them more responsibilities and decision making power, reducing the risk of dependency in longer term.</p> <p>Other participants did not have strong opinion on the voucher system. Agreed the discussion will continue. CC (at national level) and CCK (locally) will also follow-up any initiative (such as WFP's) in regards to shifting from material to cash/voucher assistance and feed to the group to discuss how it might be relevant for this Cluster's NFI.</p> <p>Regarding having more targeted distributions, generally the group agrees on the need in order to provide adapted and fair assistance, but several possible difficulties were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Difficult to assess clearly the needs because some IDPs who actually have more resources might complain more than ones having less, so targeting would be human resource heavy and could lead to more difficulties with some IDPs; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To be able to do it and clearly understand IDP resources before making decision, not only the income should be taken into consideration but also the expenses of the HH; ➤ Camp Committees will have to play a key role in explaining properly the changes and the reasons behind it to the camp residents to avoid misunderstandings, stress and tensions. <p>In conclusion, everyone agreed on the need for such targeting but that at this stage one of the main (if not the main) hurdles foreseen was the extra work and therefore extra human resources were needed to assess and implement it well.</p>	
Next Meeting	The next shelter/NFI/CCCM Cluster meeting will be June 26, UNHCR Office Bhamo.	

Documents shared in hard copy with the participants at the meeting included:

-Cluster NFI Standards for Core Kits, Sanitary kits and Hygiene Kits, also available at:

https://www.sheltercluster.org/Asia/Myanmar/RakhineAndKachin/Pages/Standards_Guidelines.aspx