Communication with Communities (CwC) is an essential part of any humanitarian operation. UNHCR and partners are working to ensure that Persons of Concern* (PoC) not only have the right to participate in making decisions that affect their lives, but also receive the information they need to be protected and have access to life-saving services and support. CwC is defined as a two-way communication between PoC and humanitarian actors.

* PoC to UNHCR in Lebanon include refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and affected host communities.

Information is disseminated in Lebanon with the ongoing support of partners and hundreds of outreach volunteers.

Key facts

Since the beginning 2017, WFP joined the UNHCR call center for queries on cash, food, winter assistance and for protection cases. The call center also supports in conducting phone surveys on various thematic areas (SGBV, child protection, health assistance, etc.). Between August and December 2018, the call center handled some 470,000 calls.

**UNHCR/WFP Call Center**
40,000 to +120,000 calls a month on food/winter/cash assistance as well as emergencies and protection cases

**Whatsapp communication tree**
85,000 families reached through 8,000 focal points (refugees and partners)

**Facebook**
Over 200,000 members in groups run by refugees with the support of UNHCR

www.refugees-lebanon.org
320,000 unique viewers

**Info Material:**
Handouts & videos

**UNHCR reception centers/desks**
7,000 counseled per month

**Bulk SMS & 2-way SMS**
Communicating with all families known to UNHCR

**Outreach efforts**
Household visits, network of outreach volunteers, etc.

**23+ partner information desks**
More than 1,000 persons persons access info desks per month in community centers across the country

**4 UNHCR Hotlines**
7,000 calls per week

**2018 PRIORITIES**
1. Intensify on-going awareness and counselling sessions in-person and over the phone to accompany the available information
2. Promote timely access to appropriate services
3. Involve communities in the planning and implementation of activities that affect their lives
4. Constantly further the use of modern technology and online tools (i.e. websites, mobile phones and social media networks)

**TOOLS:** HOW REFUGEES ACCESS INFORMATION AND GIVE FEEDBACK

- **5 UNHCR reception centers/desks**
- **Bulk SMS & 2-way SMS**
- **Outreach efforts**
- **23+ partner information desks**
- **4 UNHCR Hotlines**

**DEFINITION**
Communication with Communities (CwC) is an essential part of any humanitarian operation. UNHCR and partners are working to ensure that Persons of Concern* (PoC) not only have the right to participate in making decisions that affect their lives, but also receive the information they need to be protected and have access to life-saving services and support. CwC is defined as a two-way communication between PoC and humanitarian actors.

* PoC to UNHCR in Lebanon include refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and affected host communities.

**WHAT INFORMATION?**
Refugees need information about:

- Resources & Services
- Policies & Regulations

**KEY COMMUNICATION PROFILES AND ASSETS**

- How refugees want to receive information
  - Mobile phone and SMS: 93.1%
  - Home/face-to-face visits: 62.5%
  - Television: 13.8%
  - Internet: 11.4%
  - Outreach Volunteers: 8.9%
  - Leaflets and Posters: 2.7%
  - Radio: 2.5%

- Means of sharing information
  - Word of mouth: 95%
  - Phone/SMS: 37%
  - Internet (Whatsapp/Facebook): 32%

- Has a mobile phone
  - Yes: 94%
  - No: 6%

- Sharing phone with family/others
  - Has own phone: 80%
  - Sharing phone: 20%

Prepared by UNHCR | For more information contact Jerome Seregni, Mass Communication Officer, at seregni@unhcr.org.
ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES

Creating easy-to-understand messages

- Some UNHCR humanitarian programmes are complex and are constantly being updated with new plans and procedures (i.e. basic assistance and health).
- Assistance is provided in multiple forms (ATM cash assistance, in-kind) depending on needs and location constraints.
- The criteria for eligibility are diverse (e.g. economic vulnerability, protection concerns, dwelling type or geographical location).
- With more than 90 organizations operating in the country, it is difficult to ensure harmonized key messages are given to PoC by all humanitarian workers.
- National and local policies affecting the daily life of PoC must be explained in simple terms.
- Consistently reaching refugees with information about their individual cases (such as resettlement opportunities, civil documentation, etc.)

Maintaining permanent contact at the individual level

- Living in hard to reach areas that cannot be visited by humanitarian workers on a frequent basis (security issues, etc.)
- Frequently changing phone numbers and location
- Cannot read or understand the information in messages
- Lack of phones or sharing phone with other community members
- Limited access or do not know how to use the internet and social networks (Facebook, Whatsapp)

THEMATIC QUESTIONNAIRE: ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TOOLS

A UNHCR survey on practices of communication was conducted in 2017 with 2,000 persons.

The survey shows a significant expansion in the use of online and mobile communication in exile. This has become the current lifeline for access to information for refugees. Refugees opt for the cheapest options to get access to these communication tools, such as sharing mobile phones with the cheapest mobile subscription or home-based wireless costs among several families, or going to community centres or internet cafes. The majority use social applications like Facebook and WhatsApp to communicate with each other, their families in Syria/elsewhere and to receive and, most importantly, share information on services and assistance. In turn, humanitarian partners use these tools on regular basis to communicate on essential services, as they are an efficient and low-cost way to reach out to large numbers of people, including those living in remote areas.

% With access to a mobile phone

- 54% Previously in Syria
- 92% Today in Lebanon

% With access to the internet

- 10% Previously in Syria
- 75% Today in Lebanon

% Using of online applications (Facebook, Whatsapp, etc.)

- 12% Previously in Syria
- 73% Today in Lebanon

% Possessing an ATM bank card

- 2% Previously in Syria
- No ATM card

% Who received information through leaflets or brochures in Syria

- 2% Received information through leaflets/brochures in Syria

% Who want to receive information through leaflets or brochures in Lebanon

- 3% Want to receive information through leaflets or brochures in Lebanon

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