

MAS/UNRWA Expert Panel Workshop Series, 16 June

Talking Points: *What are the “core services” of UNRWA?*

Introduction

- Very notion of “core services” can be a difficult concept – implication that some services are “not core” and are therefore negotiable
- Typically used in UNRWA in the sense of common services, i.e. those provided across all fields, as distinct from those that are contingent on field conditions
- Suggest instead to consider the notion of “mandated” services
  - i. Where the Agency is mandated to operate
  - ii. For how long
  - iii. Who is eligible for services
  - iv. For which activities

Where: 5 fields of operation only

For how long: “pending the just resolution of the question of Palestine refugees.” Temporary mandate for more than 70 years

Who:

- Persons who meet UNRWA’s registered refugee criteria
- Persons who do not meet these criteria but who were determined to have suffered significant loss and / or hardship (“other registered persons”)
- Persons eligible to receive services without being registered (1967 displaced, exceptionally approved by CG, EA beneficiaries, Microfinance clients
- Occasional extension to a wider range of persons (e.g. as part of the Oslo process)
- Different categories are counted as such by UNRWA – registered refugees and other registered persons.

For which activities:

Evolution over time

- i. initial focus on relief and life saving activities for refugees, accompanied by economic reintegration support (“works” activities)
- ii. UNRWA assumed management of schools run by Quakers and others; however, not until late 1950s that the Agency began reorienting itself towards education. By 1970s, was the largest programme
- iii. alignment with human development paradigm since 1990s
- iv. re-emergence of large scale emergency programmes since 2000 alongside basic health and education programmes, with adjustments in line with evolving refugee priorities and needs

Education: available on a principle of universality

## NOT FOR CIRCULATION

- Basic education to 540,000 pupils across 5 fields (grades 1 – 9 except in Jordan (1 – 10) and Lebanon (1 – 12))
- Vocational training to 8,000 pupils at 8 training centres, and 2 teacher training institutes (WB and Jordan)

Health: comprehensive primary health care on a principle of universality

- Estimated 2m users of UNRWA health services each year
- Secondary and tertiary health care (1 UNRWA hospital and contracted support)

Relief services: based on status and / or vulnerability based criteria

- Social safety net programme to around 390,000 persons in 2020
- Emergency assistance to around 2m persons (universal in Gaza and Syria, due to prevailing conditions)

Protection: through registration, monitoring reporting and advocacy, service provision, no durable solutions mandate

Social services: reform of social services underway, including the development of a professional cadre of social workers

Waste management services: inside refugee camps

- Solid waste management and sanitation services inside refugee camps only

Microfinance services: all fields except Lebanon

- Available to Palestine refugees and other poor and marginal groups who live and work with them. Self funded.

Current strategic thinking:

- From some donors: need for further reforms and prioritization in light of funding shortfalls, with a view to protecting those services UNRWA is uniquely placed to deliver and without prejudice to the Agency's mandate and rights of PRs. Additional needs does not necessarily translate into additional funding.
- In current UNRWA strategy, emphasis on ensuring access for refugees to quality services, commitment to review and standardize approach to some "other registered persons".
- Focus on modernization and digitalization in development of the next multi-year strategy, increased emphasis on rights based approaches.