
SOHS 2018 CASE STUDY:

LEBANON



ALNAP is a global network of humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies, members of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, NGOs, donors, academics and consultants dedicated to learning how to improve the response to humanitarian crises.

Groupe URD is an independent institute which specialises in the analysis of practices and the development of policy for the humanitarian and post-crisis sectors.

About this case study

This case study is one in a series of five research pieces which fed into the analysis for *The State of the Humanitarian System 2018*. This research was conducted and written in April 2018.

sohs.alnap.org

Author

Nawal Karroum, Groupe URD with Yusra Bitar, Lubna Halabi and Nabil Hassan, Beyond Reform and Development.

The views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect those of ALNAP Members.



Suggested citation:

Groupe URD & ALNAP (2018) *The State of the Humanitarian System 2018 case study: Lebanon*. ALNAP Paper. London: ALNAP/ODI.

© ALNAP/ODI 2018. This work is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial Licence (CC BY-NC 3.0).

ISBN 978-1-910454-86-2

Communications management by Maria Gili and Cara Casey-Boyce

Copyediting by Anna Brown

Contents

Acronyms	4
Acknowledgements	4
Executive Summary	5
Scale and targets of the response	5
Assessing the quality of the response	6
Complementarity and connectedness among actors	7
Humanitarian cash-based assistance	7
Involvement of and accountability towards affected people and communities	8
Linking the crisis response to long-term development	8
Broader impacts of the response	9
Introduction	10
1 Context overview	10
2 Analysis and findings	14
2.1 Scale and targets of the response	14
2.2 Assessing the quality of the response	20
2.3 Complementarity and connectedness among actors	26
3 Efficiency and challenges	36
3.1 Humanitarian cash-based assistance in Lebanon	36
3.2 Involving and being accountable to affected people and communities	42
4 Impacts and conclusion	50
4.1 Linking the crisis response to long-term development	50
4.2 A difficult path towards long-term development	54
4.3 Broader impacts of the response	56
Endnotes	59
Bibliography	60

Acronyms

CSO	civil society organisation (national/local)
DFID	Department for International Development
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission
HRC	High Relief Commission
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
ITS	informal tent settlements
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LHIF	Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for Humanitarian Action
RAIS	Refugee Assistance Information System
SDC	Social Development Centre (of the MoSA)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WFP	World Food Programme

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all stakeholders who participated in this study. In particular we would like to thank Beyond Reform and Development for their support in the research process. We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of all interviewees who trusted the research team and provided their views. Without their input, this case study would not have been possible.

Executive Summary

After more than seven years, the Syrian crisis has for Lebanon become a protracted migration crisis involving refugees and the host population, in a largely urban context with a high level of political and legal complexity. Since 2015, humanitarian aid has been structured around the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), co-led by UNHCR and UNDP under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). Coordination does not rely on clusters but rather on more flexible and adaptable sectoral working groups co-led by ministries and UN agencies (and some INGOs).

Scale and targets of the response

The scale of the crisis has reached significant proportions. There are more than 1 million registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon, as well as unregistered Syrians, Palestinian refugees from Syria, vulnerable Lebanese people and other vulnerable inhabitants. Moreover, as a protracted migration crisis, these populations have multiple needs – shelter, food, health, protection, education and so on.

Although people in need of humanitarian assistance are spread all over the country, access is dependent not on geography but on other factors, including the unit cost of identifying and reaching isolated beneficiaries. In the few regions where security issues limit access to the population, local actors often fill the geographical gaps in the international humanitarian response.

Despite the millions of dollars that have been pumped into the country in the form of aid, and despite the pledges to fund the response plan, the money coming in is not enough to cover the needs. Several basic services, such as health assistance, are provided to refugees, but not completely free of charge. Many of them cannot afford the remaining fees and therefore develop their own coping mechanisms.

Changes in funding have affected the amount of aid provided and methods to target beneficiaries have been reassessed to limit their number. However, there is so little difference between refugees' socioeconomic situations that this narrowing of coverage has created an artificial distinction between Syrians who are included in beneficiary lists and those who are not. The targeting methodology, which comes from development actors such as the World Bank, is based on statistical calculations due to the scale of the response and the major use of cash-based transfers. Humanitarian actors themselves (who are more familiar with community and personal assessments) struggle to understand the methodology, as does the population.

Apart from funding constraints, as is the case in many migration crises, targeting largely depends on the status and legal identity of beneficiaries. Officially the response plan targets Palestinian refugees from Syria, vulnerable Lebanese people and other vulnerable inhabitants throughout the country. In practice, Palestinians fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and vulnerable Lebanese people are the responsibility of MoSA. As UNRWA is seriously underfunded, the Palestinians from Lebanon and Syria are probably among the most vulnerable people and are clearly overlooked by the humanitarian system. As this study highlights, populations with specific needs such as older people, people with disabilities, sexual minorities and victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and also young men, are not properly targeted. They either cannot access the assistance for which they are eligible, or they have specific needs that are not taken into account.

Assessing the quality of the response

The response involves a lot of basic service provision to both refugees from Syria and vulnerable members of the host population. The refugee population fled from one middle-income country (Syria) and settled in another (Lebanon). These populations are accustomed to a certain standard of living, which is reflected in their needs and expectations. Some of their standards and priority needs are different from those that exist in emergencies in less developed countries. As such, it is a challenge for aid actors to address them.

Perceptions of the quality of the response vary among actors, particularly as there was still no monitoring system in place for the LCRP at the time of the research. Some actors focused on the specific results of financed and implemented operations, while others contrasted the response's achievements with the huge needs still to be met. For some sectors, such as protection, quality appears to be particularly difficult to assess due to the lack of data or measurable results and the large impact of external factors.

Quality and efficiency appear to be clearly intertwined. It is difficult to compare the performance of this response to other responses, mainly because of the high standard of living in middle-income countries, the costly Lebanese context and the hybrid humanitarian and stabilisation response.

Funding constraints have also had impacts, with several operations delayed or interrupted. The quality of the response depends on long-term planning and funding predictability as well as donor flexibility and actors' ability to adapt to changes. Some Lebanese actors felt that the bureaucratic and business model that structures the response, and humanitarian system operations in general, is counterproductive compared to more pragmatic approaches adopted in the private sector.

Complementarity and connectedness among actors

The multiple layers through which aid was channelled, from donors to UN agencies or INGOs and then to Lebanese actors, before reaching the affected populations, have been criticised for being costly and time-consuming. The presence of numerous actors also increased competition over funds and created a need for more coordination. Since 2014–2015, there have been mixed results in this respect.

The establishment of a real coordination mechanism and a coordinated refugee assistance information system has made it possible to significantly reduce duplications. Moreover, the Lebanese government, which was previously quite passive and paralysed, is now playing a constructive leadership role. However, the fact that, in several sectors, the mandates of various actors overlap seems to have created a lot of confusion and competition among them.

The widespread involvement of Lebanese human resources is recognised as an essential component of the response's achievements, but more systemic aid localisation remains slow and difficult. The visibility of Lebanese civil society organisations (CSOs) has increased on the ground, and so, consequently, have their security and reputational risks. Partnerships between international and national actors have evolved, with more decision-making power and autonomy for Lebanese CSOs, though many actors feel that this has not gone far enough. The role of other Lebanese actors, such as local authorities and the private sector, has also been important. The humanitarian system has shown itself capable of adapting to such a context, but has not been very good at taking into account weak but legitimate municipal authorities.

Humanitarian cash-based assistance

More than 30% of international humanitarian funding in Lebanon has gone towards cash-based assistance, which has proven to be very effective and efficient. Methods have evolved considerably, with a gradual change from multiple cash-based mechanisms to a single cash system. This difficult process has transformed the cash assistance landscape, both in Lebanon and more generally within the humanitarian sector and is considered one of the main achievements of the humanitarian sector during this response.

Involvement of and accountability towards affected people and communities

There have been mixed results in involving the affected population and ensuring accountability to them. The level of involvement and participation of the affected population remains relatively low given that the crisis has been so prolonged, there is no language barrier and there are excellent means of communication available. At the beginning of the crisis there were a lot of participatory assessments, and the refugees expressed their weariness and sometimes discomfort with these processes, and the questions asked. With the shift to a desk formula, and due to the fact that the context is relatively stable, international actors have been doing fewer and fewer assessments. Statistical targeting represents a shift in traditional humanitarian practices, which affects the relationship between affected people and humanitarian actors in the field. In contrast, Lebanese CSOs appear to consult the population more often, whether formally or informally. Some of them emphasised how important these consultations were for their way of operating, and how, in some cases, they acted as an incentive for them to adapt their standards.

Feedback and complaints mechanisms have been widely used in the form of boxes, hotlines, emails, and surveys. Affected people often prefer face-to-face discussions to report both feedback and complaints, and they value having trust-based relationships with an interlocutor more than an anonymous confidential mechanism. Very few actual complaints (such as over abuse or corruption) have been reported and humanitarian actors are often dissatisfied regarding the effectiveness of such mechanisms, and particularly referral systems.

Linking the crisis response to long-term development

The distinction between humanitarian and development aid has been very narrow given that the response has been based on an integrated humanitarian and stabilisation strategy. However, the fact that there has been no clear vision for how the Syrian crisis will unfold, the lack of a shared political position on Syrian refugees within the Lebanese government, and the shared leadership of the response between different stakeholders make this situation unpredictable. It also complicates the implementation of a relevant response based on durable solutions.

Basic services to refugees and vulnerable members of the host population are partly provided by Lebanese institutions. However, in practice, the integration of aid assistance to refugees in the Lebanese system varies depending on sectors and can have ambiguous effects.

Moreover, despite concerns that development donors need to step in as humanitarian donors start to disengage, establishing links between humanitarian and development actors has been difficult and has not yet been fully achieved. The willingness to move from humanitarian assistance to longer-term assistance has resulted in changes in the actual funding provided, shifting towards centralised funding to big UN agencies and to a lesser extent direct funding to local actors. Most organisations have adopted and endorsed the idea of designing the response to invest in durable infrastructure that would benefit the country and the populations in the long term. However, no alternative solution has yet been found to replace the costly, recurring, short-term humanitarian operations that have been implemented to date to meet the ongoing immediate essential needs.

Broader impacts of the response

The response has probably helped to mitigate the effects of the crisis and has succeeded in maintaining political and economic stability in the country. However, it has created some aid dependency among the refugees and within the local job market.

The response has also had an impact on Lebanese civil society, with the proliferation of new organisations. Certain CSOs have grown and benefited from their cooperation with international actors in terms of knowledge transfer and capacity development. The response by the international humanitarian system has affected the human resources of CSOs, and also their missions, activities and focus. This has raised concerns about the economic sustainability of these organisations once the response ends and about their contribution to Lebanese society in the future.

Introduction

This country case study focusing on the response to the Syria crisis in Lebanon is part of the 2018 edition of the State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) study. It focuses on how the response has evolved since 2011 (positively or negatively) and, in particular, between 2015 and 2017. The two main limits of the research were the scale of the crisis (nationwide, protracted and multi-sector) and the difficulty of gaining access to data and evidence.

The present study brings together the results of a field visit to Lebanon in September and October 2017. It is based on 25 interviews carried out with staff from Lebanese public institutions (central and decentralised levels), UN agencies, international, national and local NGOs, the Lebanese Red Cross, as well as interviews with beneficiaries carried out either individually or as part of focus groups. The interviews were semi-structured, based on the interview protocol developed within the framework of the SOHS research methodology. The study also refers to existing reports on the aid response to the Syria crisis in Lebanon (see Bibliography).

1 Context overview

Lebanon's experience regarding humanitarian aid is unique. It hosts the highest percentage of refugees per capita, while still recovering from a civil war of its own. It has a fragile political system and is subject to frequent political deadlock. Although the country's civil war officially ended in 1990, its post-war traumas are still apparent. Lebanon's political system is a sectarian power-sharing system, with power divided among the different faiths in the country, as determined in the Taif Agreement.¹ Additionally, Lebanon's power-sharing political system has resulted in the predominance of a narrow form of patronage, with political support being exchanged for benefits. The central state has done little to alleviate poverty and inequality. It has, however, enabled space for the private sector to operate, and for sectarian and politically based service delivery, which reinforces religious identity as a primary social division. It is this system that enhances sectarian and political divisions and subsequently keeps the state weak and corrupt. Lebanon's political settlement is based on the bargaining between the elites of faith-based groups (Mourad and Piron, 2016).

Economically, Lebanon does not fare well. Not only did its economy suffer as a result of the 15-year civil war, but, at the end of that period, most of the country's finances were invested in the post-war reconstruction, which is still ongoing. Both factors led to an exponential increase in its debt. Between 2005 and 2016, the country's public debt increased from \$39 billion to \$75 billion. Annual growth was at 1% in 2015, down from 8.8% growth in 2010, before the Syrian war. The 2006 war between the Israeli Government and the armed resistance group Hezbollah had a devastating effect on the Lebanese infrastructure and economy (IMF, 2010). When the Syrian crisis began in 2011, it is no surprise that Lebanon was in no condition to respond adequately. According to a World Bank report, the Syrian crisis has cost the Lebanese economy around \$7.5 billion, of which \$1.1 billion was increased expenditure as a result of higher demand for public services. The Syrian war has also had a huge negative impact on Lebanon's economy due to the decrease in trade between the two countries and the closure of Syria as a corridor to the rest of the countries in the region (World Bank, 2015).

Lebanon is no stranger to hosting refugees. The turbulent region surrounding it has tested the country's resilience on several occasions, from the Armenians fleeing the Armenian Genocide, to Palestinians fleeing the Israeli occupation. The different governments involved have adopted and implemented different policies depending on each specific context, and there has been no single unified refugee policy. What is more, Lebanon has not ratified or signed the Refugee Convention, which is another reason why there has been inconsistency in its refugee policies. It is within this context that Lebanon found itself at the forefront of the Syrian crisis. As the closest neighbouring country, with historic, political, sectarian and familial ties to Syria, it has become host to the largest number of refugees per capita in the world.² In any context where services are already faltering, the rise in demand from a sudden, exponential increase in population size inevitably leads to increased tension between the host community and the refugee community. Lebanon is a perfect example of this: the existing infrastructure and basic services were not functioning properly prior to the refugee arrivals and the increased demand has increased social tensions.

At the start of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the Lebanese authorities were largely absent, with the exception of the High Relief Commission (HRC), which is mandated to work on the front line of emergencies. There were also political reasons for the lack of a government response. This includes a prominent split between political parties, the March 8 alliance and the March 14 alliance, based on their positions with regards to the Syrian regime, with the latter being strongly opposed to it (Khawaja, 2017). Due to these ties between the two countries, and the continuing influence of the Syrian regime in Lebanon (particularly via Hezbollah), the government's positioning vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees was a very sensitive issue.³

In addition, the trauma and impact of the prolonged presence of Palestinian refugees and camps⁴ have made the Lebanese government strongly opposed to any assistance that might contribute to Syrian refugees settling in the long term.

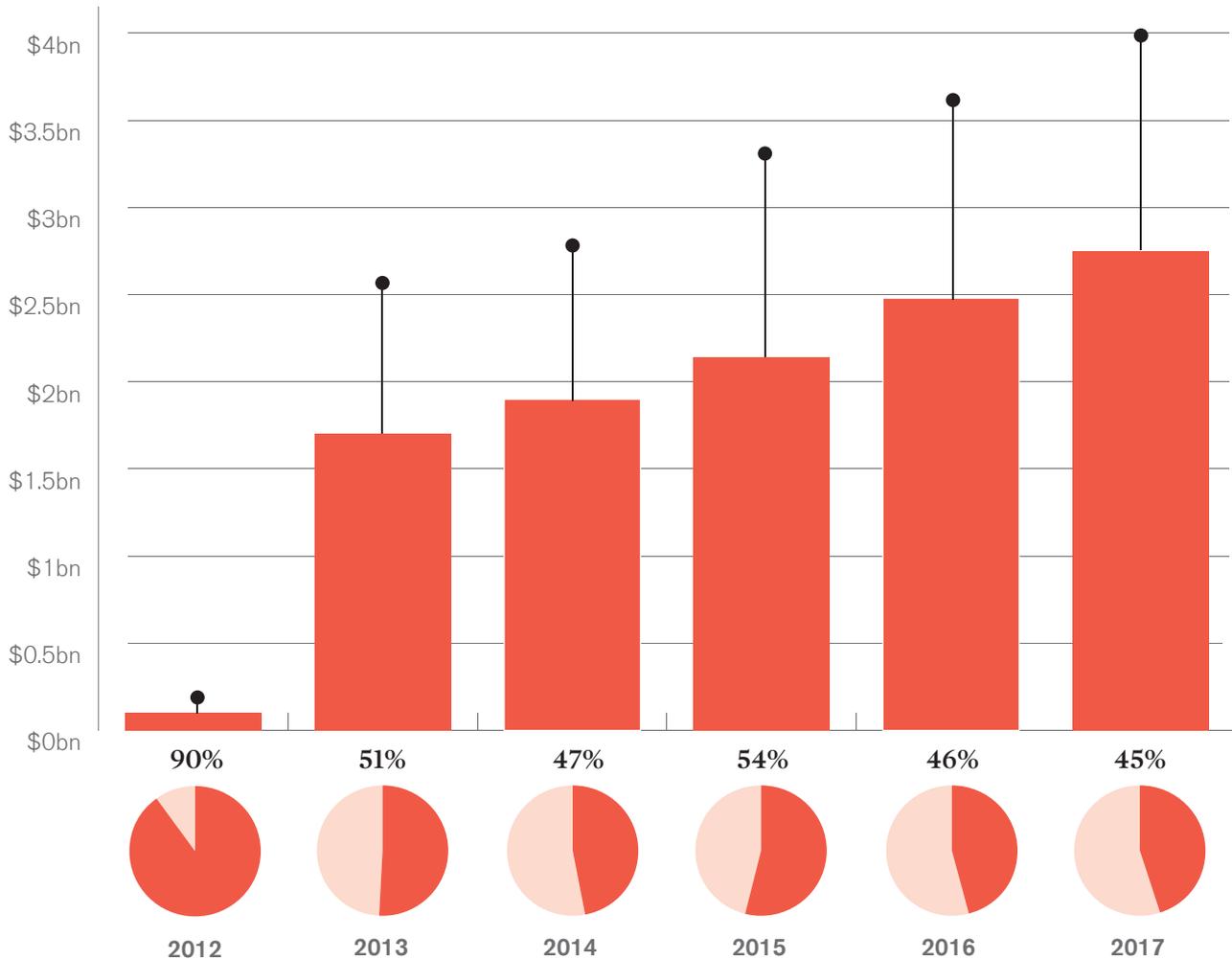
“ As humanitarian actors, we’re stuck between a rock and a hard place, where you know that these people are going to be here for a long time, and so the answer is to do something more sustainable, but you have a government that won’t allow it. ”

Donor representative

Given the political divisions within Lebanese society linked to these topics, no shared political position on Syrian refugees emerged from within the Lebanese government. Lebanese civil society played a leading role in assisting refugees on their arrival. Furthermore, the international community focused its attention very closely on the crisis due to the implications for western states regarding an influx of refugees and the proliferation of global terrorism (Grünewald et al., 2017). Numerous INGOs and UN agencies subsequently stepped in and developed a Regional (Refugee) Response Plan for Syrian refugees and host populations in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt.

The Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) has been in place since late 2014. Through it, the Lebanese government has taken a central and leading role in the design and coordination of the response. The LCRP is a unified, coordinated plan by the government with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) leading the initiatives with other line ministries involved. It does not rely on clusters but rather on sectoral working groups (thus is more subject to changes), that are co-led by ministries and either UN agencies or INGOs. It involves a large number of stakeholders and 104 partners (UN, INGOs and CSOs). The Regional Response Plan (RRP) by contrast is focused primarily on resilience, and has mainly been used for resource mobilisation and advocacy campaigns.

As of September 2017, only 27% of the LCRP was funded, compared to 40% in 2016 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 / Funding trend for response plans to the Syrian crisis, 2012–2017

Source: Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2018.

Stakeholders in the LCRP

- Ministries, including but not limited to, the major players, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Energy and Water, and the Ministry of Economy and Trade
- INGOs
- UN agencies, including but not limited to, the major players, such as UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Habitat
- Local civil society organisations
- Local authorities, including 950 municipalities – the largest number of municipalities in the world
- The affected population

2 Analysis and findings

2.1 Scale and targets of the response

The Syrian crisis in Lebanon is a protracted migration crisis and therefore involves a multiplicity of needs. Refugees who left their home and country years ago with very few resources are basically in need of everything: shelter, food, health, protection, education and so on. The scale of the crisis is also significant: in addition to 1 million registered Syrian refugees, there are also unregistered Syrians, Palestinian refugees from Syria, Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon, vulnerable Lebanese people and other vulnerable inhabitants (including other refugees) spread throughout the country.

2.1.1 Geographical coverage

Although people in need of humanitarian assistance are dispatched all over the country, the geographical coverage of the response is relatively positive. Lebanon is a very small country where most areas are easily and quickly reachable.

The main concerns related to very small informal tent settlements and isolated refugees in urban and peri-urban areas. These populations are either unidentified or reportedly too costly to assist for some sectors. The high costs (per beneficiary) incurred when delivering assistance specifically to a very small number of refugees sits uneasily with donor-driven incentives for aid actors to focus on big settlements: 'In Beirut, there are refugees, and the urban population centres seem to be a bit disregarded, because it's much more complex to work in an urban centre' (Lebanese CSO representative). Additionally, due to high competition for funds, some actors tend to position themselves in particular areas, in the hope of getting funding which may not materialise, leading to geographical gaps.

“ Three years ago we received information from informal tent settlements in one specific area that they were in need of WASH support. When we went ... we noticed that other actors said that this is the area that they had committed to support. As an organisation we would not interfere, because this is how we respect the coordination. But the second year we received the same information and we went to the site and nothing happened. And this year, we received the same information. So we decided to go, putting pressure on others, and we said we have the funds, we have the access, you are only committing to support them, but you are still fundraising and you are not getting the funds. So, sorry, because this is

a place where we can see it is a real hot area, we will respond. So the gaps are in the places where others commit to do the response, but they don't have the full capacity to cover all the needs. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

Security issues also constrain access to the population in a few areas. In Aarsal (municipality in northeast Lebanon) in particular, where the Syrian conflict has overflowed, the security risks and the controlled access by armed forces and armed groups have prevented most aid actors from entering the town and the surrounding camps. While several local actors and local partners do have access to Aarsal's population, there is very little reliable data on the assistance provided there. In Tripoli, the second biggest city after Beirut, the Syrian crisis has exacerbated existing tensions between communities, which led to several clashes between 2011 and 2015. The affected neighbourhoods, Jabal Mohsen and Tabbaneh, were classified as dangerous by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). This situation created major challenges for humanitarian actors, and particularly for most international actors who were unable to gain access to the population.

Local actors and community-based organisations often fill the gaps in geographical coverage, particularly in the areas where security is an issue.

2.1.2 Sufficiency

The sufficiency of the response (number of beneficiaries assisted and quantity of assistance provided to each beneficiary) is directly correlated to changes in funding over time. Millions of dollars have been pumped into the country in the form of aid, but despite this, and despite the pledges to fund the response plan, the money coming in is much less than the amount needed. At the time of this research, the funding level was 27% of the total funds needed (3RP, 2017).

“ In the health sector, assistance to refugees covers up to 75% of expenses (and up to 90% in some extreme cases). According to one interviewee, the remaining 25% costs that need to be met are often beyond people's means. Most of the refugees cannot afford it, nor poor Lebanese people. So the family usually starts to develop coping mechanisms. They take their children out of school, put them to work, so they can afford healthcare. It's a bit like shooting ourselves in the foot. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

According to several interviewees, donors are more reluctant to fund some sectors for ‘marketing reasons’ and sufficiency therefore varies by sector. For example, following the ‘back-to-school campaign’ and international concerns about a potential ‘lost generation’, the education sector is relatively well-funded as it is a priority for many donors and their taxpayers. By contrast, health and protection were described as insufficiently funded. Interviewees said that this is partially due to the lack of measurable and/or communicable data, either for privacy, protection or political reasons.

2.1.3 Targeting methodology and challenges

Syrian refugees

To receive assistance, Syrians have to register with UNHCR, but some have refused to do so mainly out of fear that their personal data would be accessible to the authorities. In addition, the Lebanese government adopted a policy to stop refugee registration in 2015. Therefore, all newborns and Syrians who have entered the country since 2015 have been ‘recorded’ by UNHCR rather than formally registered and have limited access to assistance (for example, until the beginning of 2017, they did not have access to cash-based assistance from WFP). The total number of unregistered Syrian refugees is often estimated to be around 500,000.

Due to the scale of the response and the major use of cash-based methods in recent years, the targeting of Syrian refugees has been based on individual data collection and household assessments. This information is centralised by UNHCR in the Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) and is then subject to calculations. The vulnerability score and ranking obtained then defines the type of assistance that refugees should be given. How refugees are targeted has also been reassessed and limited based on the funds available over time:

“Last year, at the peak of the funding, 40,000 families were covered, whereas, frankly, there were 100,000 families who were in the same situation and who should legitimately have been covered by this assistance. We will never get to the level that we need. Donors tell us, “You have to be more effective. You have to target more.” But there is so little difference between people in socioeconomic terms, in terms of shelter, that it is almost impossible to really do effective targeting. It is not that one part of the Syrian population is really poor and the rest is okay. It is perhaps 60% of people who are really poor.”

INGO representative

Humanitarian actors struggle to understand the statistical targeting methods, as does the population. The formulae and calculations are not fully shared to avoid a potential distortion in the questionnaire answers. INGO workers report how the RAIS targeting assumes that beneficiaries' declarations cannot be trusted, which undermines their relationships with the affected population (Grünewald et al., 2017).

This joint, coordinated targeting process has evolved over time, and in 2017, due to the costs and delays of regular household visits, it became exclusively based on a desk formula (although some activities and aid modalities still rely on individual assessments). This approach and related changes have been endorsed collectively, particularly by agencies implementing cash activities. However, this very sophisticated, centralised and standardised targeting process represents a shift in humanitarian practices driven by development actors, such as the World Bank. Humanitarian actors by contrast are more familiar with community and personal assessments.

The narrowing of coverage due to cuts in funding has been an incentive to develop a more precise formula to theoretically rank and differentiate the vulnerability of individuals. While modifications to the formula were motivated by the desire to target the 'most vulnerable' among vulnerable refugees, almost all actors recognise that the coverage was so low that the distinction between whether Syrians were included in beneficiary lists or not ended up being quite artificial.

“ It's great, if you compare it to many other humanitarian situations, yet we are well below ... we have to target, we have to make very difficult choices where ... we're helping some people, but other people are pushed out, because we don't have enough money. It's as simple as that. So, it's a mix. I would say it's a mixed assessment there. ”

UN representative

Palestinian refugees

While the LCRP officially includes vulnerable Lebanese people, Palestinian and other refugees, as well as Syrian refugees, in practice the assistance received depends directly on the status of individuals. Palestinian refugees from Syria, as well as Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon, fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the response targeting them is almost completely disconnected from the response to Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese people.

The number of beneficiaries relying on UNRWA services has increased by 20% since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, as has the population living in Palestinian camps which is attracted by the cheaper rent, the absence of the Lebanese authorities and the presence of various NGOs.⁵ These are attractive conditions for refugees and migrants, but also for vulnerable Lebanese people. Many of them cannot access most basic services provided by the national system in Lebanon (for health, education and other sectors) either because they don't have legal residency and papers to move about freely or because they can't afford those services. By living in the camp, they directly or indirectly rely on UNRWA services, including schools and hospitals and some local NGOs that have social and/or health centres inside or close to the camps.

While Palestinians in Lebanon have been bearing a significant burden as a result of the Syrian crisis, and despite the fact that 68% of them are living under the poverty line, UNRWA's funds have been drastically reduced. The organisation has been affected by budget cuts year after year partly as a result of money being redirected to the response to Syrian refugees' needs.

Palestinian refugees are particularly vulnerable and should be given special and greater attention. Their needs are clearly not sufficiently covered or targeted and the feeling of being left out is very common within these communities.

Populations with specific needs

Older people and people with disabilities are also not sufficiently targeted and assisted due to their limited mobility and autonomy. In a migration crisis such as this (where refugees have left one middle-income country for another) there are a significant number of older people and people with disabilities. According to several aid actors, many remain unidentified.

“I have an example of a family who lived in a building in Tripoli, with an elderly person who hadn't gone out since arriving in Lebanon and probably didn't have the ability physically. It was a building with a stair, probably no wheelchair, probably no facilities in the bathroom, nothing. Those people become a bit transparent, but these are contextual and structural difficulties: localising people, managing to follow them up... There is a lack of specialised assistance and follow-up or of a case management system for such a large population...”

INGO representative

Because older people usually do not have children to look after, their vulnerability scoring does not always allow them to gain access to assistance. Due to their very limited mobility, cash-based assistance is usually not appropriate for these two specific population groups, unless they live with relatives.

Women seem to be getting specific and appropriate assistance. However, LGBT minorities and victims of sexual- and gender-based violence have often been mentioned as overlooked categories of the affected populations. Sexuality remains taboo in Lebanese society and must be addressed with relevant approaches and methods in order to improve the security and living conditions of these vulnerable populations. While several field actors mentioned that sexual violence against refugees was of particular concern, they also faced many constraints to gaining access to information about specific cases. Such cases are usually handled by organisations that work on protection and the victims' testimonies are usually treated confidentially. On the other hand, attempting to change mentalities and legislation with regard to these people is not always considered a legitimate humanitarian objective, and agencies have to advocate in a culturally sensitive and diplomatic way.

“ The initial response plan, before the government stepped in, was specifically mentioning sexual and gender minorities as vulnerable groups, but they had to withdraw this element in the LCRP as such terminology was simply unacceptable for the government. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

Fighting against discrimination is always a long-term process, and certain stakeholders are attempting to raise awareness about these issues through coaching and training sessions.

Young men also appear to be an insufficiently targeted population group. Several interviewees underlined the importance of social status for this group. Access to jobs and livelihoods is particularly important for young men as it conditions their ability to get married and start a family. However, that access is limited by the prevailing legal, economic and sociopolitical conditions. Young men are not considered vulnerable enough (compared to women, children or older people) to be specifically targeted, and programmes are not designed to reach them (for example, protection and psychosocial support activities are often designed in a way that they mainly reach children and their mothers); or they just do not provide them with the opportunities they are looking for. Young men from the affected populations have also been discriminated against within Lebanese society (they are

more subject to arrests by the armed forces and are perceived to be taking the jobs of the Lebanese), and their presence is also seen as a threat to security. The focus seems to be more on keeping them busy (potentially through vocational training) rather than responding to their needs for sustainable livelihoods and really empowering them.

2.2 Assessing the quality of the response

2.2.1 The difficulties involved

Assessing the quality of humanitarian assistance in this migration crisis is not easy as it is understood differently depending on the actors concerned, their mandates (and the population they target) and whether their interventions are short, medium or long-term. Even the interviewees who had had previous humanitarian experience outside Lebanon found it difficult to compare the quality and effectiveness of this response to other responses, mainly because of the high standard of living in middle-income countries and the hybrid humanitarian and stabilisation response plan in Lebanon.

Generally speaking, there have been no particular concerns about the relevance of the assistance provided, but rather about its quantity and about sectors and needs that should have been further prioritised. Both refugees from Syria and vulnerable members of the host population are accustomed to a certain standard of living of middle-income countries, which is reflected in their needs and expectations. Some of the standards and priority needs of these populations are different from those that exist in emergencies in less developed countries. As such, it is a challenge for humanitarian aid actors to address them. In the health sector, for example, many Syrian refugees are not used to paying for health services and feel that their needs are not being met; the Syrian public health system funded a great deal of medical care before the crisis. Some of the refugees' vital needs are actually being overlooked, such as chronic and non-communicable diseases, which are particularly common in protracted crises and middle-income countries:

“ What has been criticised a lot in Lebanon is the use of classic forms of humanitarian assistance whereas the population has health problems that are more like those of European populations than those in sub-Saharan Africa. Typically, all chronic illnesses, cholesterol, high blood pressure, etc. is all treated very badly by health assistance, which, for budgetary reasons, focuses on specific cases or life-threatening cases where people suffer or die from the consequences of chronic illness. ”

INGO representative

Interviewees had very different objectives or expectations in mind. Some actors tried to assess quality and effectiveness based on the objectives established in the LCRP, but this was challenging and they did not always have these objectives clearly in mind.

In the absence of a monitoring system for the LCRP (which was being implemented at the end of 2017), it is particularly difficult to judge effectiveness based on these objectives. One Lebanese CSO representative noted that there was ‘a lot of money put in, but results aren’t always there’ and ‘very little data on the real impact of the response’.

“ Some actors feel that the lack of any monitoring system for the LCRP limits the quality of the response. They advocate for a mechanism that will not only focus on the specific results of financed and implemented operations, but also on the broader impact of the response.

If (...) we compare the numbers from the beginning of the response to now, there is an increase in reach. Quantitatively, you can say there are results. Qualitative data shows otherwise. ”

INGO representative

“ We know 200,000 children are in public schools, but we don’t know if they’re actually improving their level of education (could be repeating the same class). Impact is not well monitored. It is not only the fault of the system, but a collective responsibility we all have. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

Field actors often compared the response’s achievements to the huge uncovered needs. After almost seven years, in a context where the number of people below the poverty line keeps increasing, they rarely expressed satisfaction regarding the general quality of the response. Some actors tried to compare the current situation with the situation that would have existed if the humanitarian sector had not provided this response, highlighting the estimated impact of the response on the social, economic and political stability of the country. However several interviewees also expressed their frustration that the response is normalising unacceptable situations and contributing to a certain status quo, maintaining both refugee and host communities in a survival situation. ‘The situation is worsening. The humanitarian response did well in maintaining the status quo, but it is not improving,’ according to a Lebanese CSO representative.

“ The performance of some sectors, such as protection, is particularly difficult to assess. This is mainly due to the lack of data or measurable results, but also because changes take longer to occur and are impacted more by external factors.

In terms of child marriage, the impact won't happen in one or two years. It's long term. The problem is the environment. It is great to work on protection, but if the family still needs money, the child will still work. The child will still get married young. You do what you have to do to cope... ”

Lebanese CSO representative

Protection is both a cross-cutting issue and a particular sector with its own strategy, programmes and activities. Several interviewees involved in cash or shelter assistance mentioned the expected impact of their interventions on refugees' protection. According to actors involved in protection, community-based protection activities have been implemented successfully in Palestinian camps where the community included the Lebanese population and Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS). These activities were presented as particularly effective in areas and communities where there have been violent clashes (such as Jabal Mohsen and Tabbaneh).

Many also mentioned the presence of aid actors in the field as an important factor for protection in these regions. The main protection activities include accompanying refugees in their administrative procedures in order to obtain identity papers (including birth certificates for their children), which affects their access to legal status and basic rights. Thanks to international humanitarian actors' advocacy, the government has officially lifted the main administrative constraint for refugees' access to legal residency (\$200 mandatory entrance/visa fee). However, this decision has not yet been fully implemented and is applied differently from one end of the country to the other. Unfortunately, there is little follow-up on this and there is a need for continuous advocacy. The voice of UN agencies and specialised INGOs is seen by several actors as too cautious and inconspicuous.

“ We haven't been that good in terms of protection in Lebanon. The fact that there isn't any real Lebanese sovereignty means that there is a type of laissez-faire... But there is no framework that has protected them. The UNHCR [the protection agency] has made some major mistakes such as de-recording [unregistering] people, which is kind of crazy... even though I don't think the status that the UNHCR gives is as protective as it could be. ”

INGO representative

2.2.2 Intertwined quality and efficiency

Although many needs are yet to be met, the response to the Syria crisis in Lebanon has been prolonged and has received a great deal of funding. Interviewees almost systematically assessed the quality of the response in relation to the amount of funds allocated. This has been reinforced by the high and increasing level of competition between actors.

One main limit for the efficiency of the response is the costly Lebanese context (operational costs and prices in general). Legal and political constraints and the absence of formal camps have also pushed aid actors to implement very costly operations such as providing water that is transported by truck.

A perceived lack of transparency regarding the monitoring of some allocated funds has contributed to the idea that the response is not efficient and therefore not as effective as it should be. Taking education as an example, the amount of money channelled through the public system, the lack of trust in Lebanese public institutions, partly due to risks of corruption, and the lack of accessible, detailed M&E information, have all also fed the idea that the response is not efficient.

The Ministry of Education has introduced a double shift policy in 238 Lebanese public schools, whereby Lebanese students attend the morning shift and Syrian refugees attend the afternoon shift. The public school system had already been failing to cope with Lebanese students, with only 30% of students attending public school. There are more Syrian refugee children of school age in these schools than Lebanese students. Currently, about 200,000 Syrian children are not receiving an education.

“ In proportion to the astronomical amount of money that is invested in education, there are not that many children who are covered. There is an enormous amount of money that is put into education for an impact that is relatively moderate. ”

INGO representative

“ The Lebanese authorities lead and implement this sector, which contributes (at least officially) to the stability and social cohesion objective between the two communities.

There have been a lot of efforts to make sure that not just the Syrians are benefiting from the response, but also the Lebanese. So, for example, you have the accelerated learning programme, which Lebanese children can also benefit from, and which was not even present previously. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

However the needs of these two populations differ somewhat and many actors consider that the service provided by the public system, but financed by international humanitarian aid, does not target Syrian children’s needs enough. There are numerous cases of Syrian children who attend official Lebanese schools who end up repeating classes partly due to different educational backgrounds, and the languages used, which makes it difficult to adapt to the Lebanese programme. Also, some students have been out of school for years as a result of the war and displacement, which holds them back even more in comparison to the rest of their classmates.

The relevance of education assistance depends on the vision for the future of Syrian children living in Lebanon and how the crisis is expected to unfold. While the efforts of the state to integrate all Syrian children into the formal education system are to be welcomed, the relevance of the education provided will depend on whether they are integrated into Lebanese society or they return to Syria.

2.2.3 Impact of funding mechanisms

All actors agree that the quality of a response in a protracted crisis context like Lebanon clearly relies on long-term planning and funding predictability. Initially, the response was clearly approached from a short-term perspective, but the LCRP has brought a multi-year perspective. The commitment of donors to support multi-year funding at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 has also contributed to some improvement in this regard. Nevertheless, multi-year funding remains rare and big international actors and smaller local ones do not have equal access to it.

“ The predictability of the funding is what allows you to establish longer-term planning. Once you have this possibility to actually do the quality, longer-term planning, that’s where you have all the room to achieve as much as possible, in terms of efficiencies. Once you’re on the short-term funding, it is mission impossible. ”

UN representative

Operations have often been delayed either due to funding constraints (donor and bureaucratic procedures), modifications to the operational method (cash) or changes in the context (including national policy modifications). Therefore, the quality of assistance depends a great deal on donors’ flexibility and understanding of both the intervention and the context and on actors’ ability to adapt to changes in the context.

Some actors, in particular Lebanese ones, also felt that the lack of effectiveness and efficiency was related to the actual bureaucratic and business model that structures the response to the crisis and humanitarian system operations in general. They compared this to what was considered a more pragmatic approach in the private sector:

“ If you’re a project manager in the humanitarian sector, and you don’t spend all of your budget, there’s a problem usually, because funds cannot be rewarded for being more efficient. You are rewarded for finishing the project as it is written in the proposal. A basic concept of project management in the private sector, which is that you gain more understanding about the situation as the project goes on, is for some reason completely disregarded with most partners. Because of the funding mechanisms of the humanitarian sector, it’s completely disregarded with most partners, meaning that you start a project, you generally know very little, but you should have a lot of flexibility. As you find out more, in order to achieve the desired outcomes, you should be able to change your approach in the project, not change the final outcomes, but change the approach. In the humanitarian sector it’s very difficult, for every small change you want to make you have to write pages and pages, and it’s not viewed favourably. So you avoid doing it. So sometimes we sacrifice on the outcomes because of the process. So that doesn’t help with effectiveness. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

2.3 Complementarity and connectedness among actors

2.3.1 The complexity of coordination

Several interviewees perceived the presence of numerous actors as having a negative impact on collective effectiveness and efficiency. Their presence has increased competition for funds and created a need for more coordination. In several sectors, the mandates of various actors overlap. This seems to have created a lot of confusion and competition among them and complicates the monitoring and impact assessment of interventions.

“You have different ministries who want to do vocational training and each of them has their own programme. You have the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, the Ministry of Labour. Then you have UNHCR, who has a specific programme for that, but also UNICEF, ILO... And they are competing for funding. In that sense, as a donor, if you say, I want to do vocational training, it's not really clear who would you go to and how would you approach this.”

INGO representative

Moreover, many actors mentioned the multiple layers through which aid was channelled from donors to UN agencies and/or INGOs and then to Lebanese actors before reaching the affected population. These multiple layers, and the related costs, are one of the reasons why direct cash assistance has been promoted, as it involves few intermediaries.

Most interviewees acknowledged that the establishment of a real coordination mechanism and a coordinated refugee information system had made it possible to significantly reduce duplication. Consequently, it has contributed to better coverage of the affected populations and increased the effectiveness of the overall response.

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) is not only the leading ministry coordinating the response but also an implementing actor, providing lists of vulnerable Lebanese people to partners and carrying out activities via its own social development centres (SDCs). However MoSA representatives themselves either identify the role of the ministry independently from the work of its SDCs, or consider the assistance it provides to Lebanese people to be separate from what they consider to be the response to the Syria crisis. In practice, in some working groups, the ministries provide strong leadership though sometimes this is seen as too overbearing. Some organisations mentioned that they had organised parallel meetings to avoid what they considered to be the ‘dictates’ of the person in charge of coordination in a public administration.

Similarly, UNHCR has multiple roles in this response. As the co-lead agency of the response and of some working groups, it has a strong coordination role and is in charge of the Refugee Assistance Information System. The agency is also perceived as a donor because it channels funds as well as being an implementing body. This situation has been criticised by actors who feel that UNHCR excessively centralises refugee information and does not share the information in a transparent and equitable manner among actors.

“ I think there is a problem of leadership, of vision, because there are no forums, no real discussions and there is nobody who is a little more neutral to take care of coordination. Even if it is two different UNHCR teams, in the end, the bosses are the same. It is the same for UNDP who has a coordination and an implementing role, but does not always distinguish between the two functions. ”

INGO representative

INGOs have also been involved in coordination, either individually as co-leads of some working groups or collectively through the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum (LHIF). Created in 2012, the LHIF brings together 33 INGOs and is a major actor which advocates in favour of increasing and improving the coordination and accountability of humanitarian actors.

Having several actors with different coordination mandates seems sometimes to limit the effectiveness of the response rather than foster it.

“ There’s a lot of competition between the large UN agencies, whose mandate is to coordinate. In some cases, you see that certain sectors are not moving as well as they should because there’s this internal competition ... Cash being a great example, where a single agency has to be chosen, there’s a lot of stalling, for six months, on where the money should go. ”

INGO representative

Coordination mechanisms have also been criticised for being too time-consuming and costly, in particular for small organisations that do not have sufficient resources.

“ There are too many meetings. There’s not enough work on ensuring the effectiveness of those meetings. People have to sit face-to-face and discuss and so on, but there has to be a balance that is found between that and the ‘over meeting syndrome’, like the solution to every problem is a meeting. That’s not the case. So, we do not have the resources to participate in all these meetings. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

Language is usually not considered to be an issue as Syrian and Lebanese dialects are very similar and many Lebanese speak fluent English and Arabic. However, the generalised use of English as the coordination language prevents some local Lebanese NGOs and many local public actors (such as SDCs and municipalities) from playing a greater role in the response and its coordination:

“ Personally, I think the English language is a barrier, as regular meetings between the MoSA, local NGOs and INGOs are usually held in English. I don’t speak English, so I ended up not participating in those meetings anymore. ”

SDC director

2.3.2 Highly qualified Lebanese human resources

There was a general consensus among interviewees that Lebanese human resources were an essential component of the response and that they played an important role in the response’s achievements and its overall effectiveness. The Lebanese population is well educated and many Lebanese people have been employed by international and Lebanese organisations to take part in the response to the Syrian crisis. While most employees had not studied or worked in this field, they already had a high level of language and management skills.

“ When it comes to the level of innovation, the capacity to mobilise resources, and it’s not only money, it’s also organisations, other NGOs or national organisations... the operation has benefited from a very high level of education when it comes to national staff. So, this also has contributed to the development of very high standards in terms of quality. ”

UN representative

Until 2014, there were a lot of international humanitarian staff. It was felt that they were decreasing the global efficiency of the response. The situation started to create tensions as Lebanon was (and still is) going through an economic crisis with a high rate of unemployment. The Lebanese government began to put pressure on international actors and became stricter about issuing residency and work permits for humanitarian staff. This coincided with the sector’s awareness that more had to be done to involve and work with Lebanese actors in the response. While every interviewee recognised that it was necessary to hire national staff, it seems that it happened late and was too brutal. There was a major turnover within international organisations, and more Lebanese staff were taken on, including in higher positions. According to several interviewees, this turnover created delays in delivery. Moreover, although they were competent, some Lebanese employees’ inexperience was criticised, particularly when they were in high coordination positions.

“ The problem with an extremely fast nationalisation is that it is impossible to find lots of experienced managers and coordinators... Those with real experience were already employed in the development sector, for other UN agencies, or had decided to create their own structures, etc. So we found ourselves with young people who didn’t necessarily have any experience, who had 50 older and more experienced people in front of them that they were supposed to coordinate. Which is no easy task! ”

INGO representative

Another negative impact of this nationalisation of humanitarian staff was the ‘brain-drain’ from Lebanese organisations. In some Lebanese organisations and institutions employees are paid less than in the private sector or in INGOs and UN agencies. This can create a lack of motivation and minimise the effectiveness of implementers. When international actors suddenly opened up numerous well-paid positions to Lebanese staff, many qualified and experienced workers from CSOs applied and got the jobs.

2.3.3 The role of local actors and connectedness

Slow start to CSO involvement

Despite the fact that CSOs were actually the first responders to the refugee crisis, initially the international humanitarian community barely took them into account. Subsequently, there was a shift in programmatic approaches in 2014–2015 when international agencies started to partner with Lebanese CSOs. By that time, the main objectives of such partnerships were usually to decrease operational costs and to gain access to the population (in particular in some areas such as Palestinian camps and Tripoli). The Lebanese CSOs were seen as implementing partners or sub-contractors rather than equal partners. They often faced challenges to be donor-compliant with administrative and financial reporting. The main justification given for not providing them with direct funding to implement projects on their own was their perceived lack of managerial and technical capacities.

In addition to their major contribution to implementing the response in different sectors, these national and local CSOs have been playing a special and essential role in terms of decreasing social tensions between communities (in Tripoli, in the Palestinian camps, and between host and refugee communities). Partnerships between international and national aid actors have increased the role and the visibility of Lebanese actors on the ground. While this change was seen as a positive one, Lebanese CSOs quickly started to complain that they were not able to take part in the project design phases or contribute to strategic decisions despite carrying all the reputational and security risks in the field.

“ In one project we had to implement a cash distribution for 400 households within a population of 80,000, where half of them are below the poverty line. The targeting and everything were donor requirements, so we did the distribution but it was a disaster. People started to hate us, and some threatened our staff. At the end we said, we won't participate in a project or activity anymore unless we are part of the designing. So we learnt to say 'no', and it worked! It was a great opportunity for us to start giving our inputs from the beginning and to do it in the right way. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

Partnerships between international and national actors have evolved with more decision-making power and autonomy for Lebanese CSOs. Since late 2014, in the WASH sector for example, INGOs and CSOs have started to divide the areas where they work. One organisation is in charge of a neighbourhood, and other actors have to coordinate with them if they want to implement programmes there. This horizontal approach is much preferred by CSOs and is linked to the shift towards longer-term interventions, which makes it possible to build on previous activities.

The humanitarian sector's localisation agenda, and especially the discussions about INGOs' exit strategies (usually based on transferring their activities to their local partners), reinforced Lebanese CSOs' position in the response, as illustrated by this explanation from an INGO representative:

“ We currently have three people from a local organisation who work with us, in our offices, as if they were our own staff, and then, when we leave a geographical area, they will be responsible for this area. We haven't finalised this approach, but what we would like to transfer to them is the structural, professional side, the tools that would allow them to frame their processes and help to build credibility. As it happens, this partnership was imposed by our donor UNICEF. The CSO in question has their own direct funding from UNICEF and we have ours. It is therefore a genuine partnership that is nothing like sub-contracting. ”

The complementarity of these actors and the added value of each are being progressively recognised. Many CSOs acknowledge the advocacy capacity and the support provided by the INGO forum. At the same time, INGOs recognise CSOs' technical capacities:

“ We've partnered very well with one Lebanese NGO, on a strategic level, when it comes to gender, which is more technical... when we talk about local partners, we usually talk about access to communities because they lack technical know-how. But, in this case, the local NGO actually has the technical know-how and they are actually more of a partner, in that sense. ”

INGO representative

This is reflected at the coordination level where one of the two main CSO networks, the Local NGO Forum, is now a member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT),⁶ and it is invited to the inter-sector meetings as an observer.

CSOs and humanitarian principles

Some CSOs, such as the Lebanese Red Cross, and other NGOs (in particular in the health sector) had already completely endorsed humanitarian principles. However, Lebanese CSOs have often been criticised by international humanitarian actors for not following humanitarian principles and having political and religious affiliations. They have regularly been accused or suspected of not being neutral and impartial and of favouring certain communities. It is clear that many CSOs in Lebanon are rooted in a particular community or interest group, and that many rely on volunteers and sometimes on friends and family networks. However, this does not necessarily imply that they do not assist communities affected by the crisis impartially, and with justice and equity (words preferred by several Lebanese interviewees).

“ The people I am working with are not calling it ‘humanitarian principles’. For many Lebanese organisations, when we are talking about neutrality, it’s very sensitive, because they will tell you, (and I do understand), “no one is neutral towards suffering”, etc. You know, those are just words, and people will tell you that humanitarian principles, as they are formulated, are not suitable in this context. Now, when you understand, and when you discuss a little bit further, we all agree on what is neutrality, what is independence. So, I don’t see any problem with humanitarian principles. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

After years of working together, this reductive and distorted vision of Lebanese civil society has progressively given way to a more nuanced and realistic understanding of the issue. However, as mentioned by this INGO representative, some concerns remain about the economic independence of aid actors and potential conflicts of interest in some processes:

“ There are situations where the mayor is the cousin of the contractor that you employ, who is also the brother of your own employee... In terms of economic interests, notably small-time business mafias, it’s more complicated. ”

Public authorities – state actors

The state and the public sector have been strongly involved in the response since 2015, from planning and strategic decisions to providing assistance through local public institutions and infrastructures (public hospitals, public schools and SDCs). The state plays a greater role in the response towards vulnerable Lebanese people than in providing direct individual assistance to refugees. State involvement therefore varies depending on the sector and on whether there are vulnerable Lebanese people. For example, the education response to the crisis is clearly designed and implemented by the state, while its involvement is much more limited when it comes to providing shelter assistance to refugees.

One major challenge for local ministries is the lack of long-term plans, especially for the regions. This is particularly clear in the WASH sector where there is a lack of coordination between the public authorities involved in this sector at the national and regional/local levels. Aid actors have identified this as an additional constraint and a barrier to working more with these institutions.

State action has also constrained the response and some political and legal measures have increased refugees' vulnerability to protection abuses (committed sometimes by the state's armed forces). The Lebanese government has a strong capacity to control and orientate the response and to put pressure on aid actors. Lebanese organisations are particularly subject to political pressure, either from the state or from local public authorities, and from the population itself, and therefore cannot easily stand up and advocate for refugees' rights.

Public authorities – local authorities

The quality and nature of the cooperation between international actors and local public authorities (either municipalities or representatives of the different ministries) differ greatly from one region to another and depend principally on human relations. New local councils and therefore mayors were elected in 2016. The uncertainty of this election period and the changes in leadership led to major disruption in plans and coordination in several villages, and delays in implementation. This situation did not allow for greater participation by, or coordination with, local authorities. Municipalities that are weak and lack operational capacities have been particularly marginalised by the aid sector.

“ They [local authorities] want to be part of meetings, and fair enough, it's their country, they want to know what people are doing, and how they're supporting those communities. So, I feel they are actively participating. Whether they have a strong voice is another thing. ”

Donor representative

“Municipal representatives complain of being used only to authorise rather than be involved in project design and implementation. However they can be a key player.

Where the local authority is strong and engaged, the results are very quick, or are much more effective... Unfortunately, it is still the exception rather than the rule to have very engaged local authorities.”

Lebanese CSO representative

Local authorities also have to deal with the tensions between local communities and refugees. While some exacerbate these tensions and clearly adopt a position against the presence of refugees, others might just be constrained by public opinion on this issue within their local community.

“...I think the majority want to help and support the response. I would feel that the majority don't want to see people suffering, but they also have to think how a large group of people will affect the community, and to try and balance those views. So, we've seen some municipalities, and maybe some mayors, having quite a harsh line, in their approach to Syrians, and that's grown, I guess, in time. But I think the majority are trying to find that balance.”

Donor representative

The private sector

In a context where the private sector is very developed, companies have also been very involved in the response. This has mainly been as service providers for refugees such as water trucking and septic tank de-sludging. For cash-based assistance, for instance, this involves using banking facilities and engaging with the banks, but also with the shops that were contracted for the e-voucher cash for food programme. More innovative is the use of a third party administrator, as observed in secondary/tertiary healthcare programmes:

“ We have a commercial contract with a service provider that will do the verification that the hospital has charged the proper care, and reimburse the hospitals, etc. It’s not something that we’ve invented, it exists here in Lebanon. Now, this model is what should apply for primary healthcare centres but they’re run by NGOs and that’s part of the landscape. You could say there should be a greater involvement of the state, but ... that’s not our business, in a sense. ”

UN representative

Several shelter programmes were implemented using innovative methods such as house and settlement renovation (either directly through a private company or by financially supporting the landlord’s renovation work). In exchange, landlords commit to maintaining free or low rent for refugees for a certain amount of time. This method has been successful in meeting shelter needs, but it involves close management of each rehabilitation and a lot of intermediaries, which makes it expensive. Also, it does not always completely meet shelter standards:

“ People are quite critical of anything that is a bit experimental and donors are going to stop funding everything to do with shelter rehabilitation, because of the impression that they are just putting on a plaster with activities that do not necessarily reach the goal of giving greater dignity, having a healthier house, etc. ”

INGO representative

There has also been quite active and innovative engagement with academic actors in particular to settle the new statistical approach to vulnerability.

3 Efficiency and challenges

3.1 Humanitarian cash-based assistance in Lebanon

3.1.1 Relevance, coverage and sufficiency of cash transfers

Cash transfer has been a very relevant form of assistance in the context in Lebanon, with well-structured financial institutions and a developed local market coupled with the easy access to ATMs and shops. Through cash transfers, access to beneficiaries is not an issue and refugees get the assistance that is intended for them (although there is no guarantee about who gets the money within the household). Given general trends in the humanitarian sector, the humanitarian response in Lebanon has tended to favour the use of cash-based assistance, particularly since 2014. It has become the main channel for providing basic assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees and represented \$400 million to \$500 million in 2016, equivalent to 30% to 38% of the total international humanitarian funding for that year (Bailey and Harvey, 2017).

Cash-based programmes can target particular sectors and needs through paper or electronic food vouchers that can be used in specific shops (approximately 450 across the country); or take the form of ‘winterisation’ seasonal grants or educational grants; or seek to support refugees in meeting their self-identified priority needs using multipurpose cash transfers. In theory, these multipurpose cash transfers were not intended to include food as they were aimed at the most vulnerable refugees who already received food vouchers. In practice, however, this form of cash transfer is unconditional as refugees withdraw the money and then spend it as they want, as is the case with ‘winterisation’ and educational grants. Therefore, refugees do not clearly differentiate between the cumulative grants they receive (onto one single card) but rather between conditional cash (food e-vouchers) and unconditional cash (all types of grants).

Table 1 / Types of cash transfer, amounts and beneficiaries

Assistance	Agencies	Monthly \$ (family of 5)	HH reached	People reached	% of refugees
Winterisation/ seasonal grant (winter only)	UNHCR	\$120	140,000	700,000	70%
Food voucher (electronic)	WFP	\$135	127,205	674,189	67%
Multipurpose cash transfer (not including food)	UNHCR	\$175	30,000	159,000	16%
	LCC	\$175	14,000	74,200	7%
Education grant	UNICEF	\$20-\$64	20,600		11%
Food voucher (paper)	MCC, CLMC, ACF LSESD	\$135	1,815	9,622	1%

Source: Bailey and Harvey, 2017⁷

Cash-based assistance, and more specifically unconditional cash, empowers refugees as it gives them flexibility to spend their money according to their priority needs (protection, shelter, health). Therefore, unconditional/multipurpose cash is seen by many aid actors as the most relevant form of cash transfer. Beneficiaries also tend to prefer it, as a Syrian refugee explained:

“ Usually, we use most of the money for rent rather than food. But it is not enough, because basically, you know, the rent is high, and we have many debts to pay. So, when the 16th or 17th of the month comes, and we take the money, we already have other debts to pay, for groceries and shops, and other things. ”

Unconditional/multipurpose cash also avoids the risk of corruption and abuse from shop owners. It allows refugees to monitor their resources more effectively when it is given in a fixed and systematic monthly amount.

Although there has been an enormous amount of cash assistance (due to the scale and length of the response), it is also considered to be insufficient and has been negatively affected by a lack of funding. The value of the monthly electronic voucher for food was reduced from \$30 to \$20 per person in December 2014 and even to \$13.50 during the summer of 2015. The number of beneficiaries was decreased and assistance to new arrivals and Palestinian refugees has been interrupted due to funding shortages.

While this form of assistance has proven to be very effective, it has also created a lot of tension with host communities:

“ Despite the limits of humanitarian assistance, there is an aid network for Syrians that has no equivalent for Lebanese people. It can't be denied. 5,000 to 6,000 Lebanese families receive financial assistance. I don't find that very relevant for the Lebanese, but as a proportion it is absurd. Monetary aid has never existed as a social security system for the Lebanese. It has probably contributed to the prevailing resentment and racism, even though a lot of organisations try to take it into account, watch out for and quantify all these tensions, etc. ”

INGO representative

3.1.2 Coordinating and harmonising cash-based assistance

Due to the enthusiasm for cash, many actors have been involved in cash assistance to Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis. The need to coordinate and harmonise humanitarian actors' approaches has become increasingly evident.

One of the main issues has been to harmonise and unify the targeting process to avoid duplication and to ensure that the most vulnerable Syrian refugees were included in beneficiary lists. The refugee information and assistance database, centralised and managed by UNHCR (not specific to cash transfer as it applies to the response globally), contributed a great deal in this sense. However, joint targeting was still not fully in place at the time of the research and obtaining a detailed picture of the complete targeting mechanism appeared to be challenging. For example, contrary to what was initially and officially planned, not all multipurpose cash assistance beneficiaries were part of the WFP's food voucher programme. Many households also receive different transfers from different organisations, in several programmes the value of the monthly transfers has changed over time, and beneficiary lists have evolved (due to funding limitations and the reassessment of refugees' vulnerability). The targeting process remains complex and is very confusing for most refugees.

Coordination was further improved by introducing a single delivery card, managed by WFP, that can be used by the different major cash providers, while allowing them to continue their different forms of cash transfer (with varying amounts, frequency of payment, unconditional cash vs food e-vouchers, and so on). This approach had been promoted by donors such as ECHO and DFID since late 2013 but was adopted progressively. In December 2014 the Lebanon Cash Consortium NGOs joined the process as an 'indirect user' of the WFP-managed payment system with a sub-account. Discussions between UNHCR and WFP took much longer partly because UNHCR could not authorise WFP to manage its funds. The two agencies finally signed an agreement in June 2015 after one year of intense negotiations and started a pilot phase where UNHCR had its own bank account. In December 2016, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and the Lebanon Cash Consortium jointly contracted a new financial service provider. Since then, they have continued to work on how to best manage their common platform (LOUISE).

3.1.3 Towards a single and streamlined cash assistance programme

Although substantial improvements towards more harmonised approaches among actors were being made, ECHO and DFID considered that there was a need to push this dynamic much further: '...from a donor point of view, I don't think it's effective. I think it's been slow to change, and it's taken us about a year to see some change,' one donor representative explained.

DFID and ECHO had two objectives. One was to improve the quality of humanitarian cash-based assistance by putting the needs of beneficiaries at the centre of the response and to monitor impact based on solid evidence. They argue that this was in keeping with international recommendations,⁸ in particular regarding the efficiency, transparency and accountability of the cash-based response and joint financing mechanisms.

The second objective was to move towards a more medium to long-term approach in the response, anticipating continued need for basic assistance while humanitarian donor fatigue begins to build. By adopting a safety net type model, they wanted to attract new funding from development donors to support cash-based assistance for refugees in the longer term and extend it to vulnerable Lebanese people.

“ We’ve always said, if we’re going to try to reform the cash assistance sector, it can’t just be for the next two, three years. It has to be a longer-term goal, with some kind of social safety net system for the most vulnerable. So, bringing the Lebanese Social Safety Net together, maybe, within whatever we’re trying to create here in the crisis response, to enable some kind of system that development donors will be interested in. It’s the social safety net side that hopefully will get the interest of development donors...”

Donor representative

At the time of writing this case study, it was too early to know what the reaction of development actors would be and if such an initiative would effectively meet expectations.

ECHO and DFID’s promotion of a unified and streamlined nationwide programme was justified by research (Drummond et al., 2015) showing that unrestricted cash was more effective than vouchers. It was also supported by the evaluation of the pilot phase of the UNHCR and WFP joint payment system, pointing out inefficiencies, coordination overlaps, and ‘a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities’ (Creti, 2015). Their initiative aimed to support refugee resilience, guaranteeing them an unconditional and unrestricted monthly fixed amount of cash assistance for a period of three years. They subsequently launched a call for proposals in December 2016 (simultaneously with the launch of the LOUISE platform by major cash providers).

3.1.4 A difficult year of transition

The strategic and operational changes required to achieve this unified and streamlined nationwide programme involved long and arduous negotiations throughout 2017, with strong views held by different actors involved in cash-based assistance in Lebanon and globally.

“Originally ... ECHO/DFID said they had \$86 million that they wanted to give to a single agency. This, of course, created a big debate and a lot of political back and forth, that went to the level of Brussels ... because everybody was pushing and pulling on who this money should go to.”

INGO representative

The donors wanted their financial support to be exclusive in order to evaluate the impact of their particular interventions. As a result, they had to increase the amount provided per refugee (to compensate for the WFP food vouchers the beneficiaries used to receive) and therefore exclude some of their own beneficiaries (who, nevertheless, would probably be included in other actors' cash assistance programmes).

Cash assistance has been somewhat chaotic during this year of transition in Lebanon. There have been a lot of changes that have brought uncertainty and insecurity. According to many interviewees there has been a real lack of coordination in this transitional process.

“It just didn't come together. And partly, this is a kind of weakness in the coordination at the working group level, because, so many of these conversations around cash have got so political, they've been happening in corridors and private meeting rooms. That has left kind of a vacuum in the official coordination discussions, which means that effective coordination has not been happening.”

INGO representative

Negotiations regarding the new single payer partner led to assistance being interrupted for several months until the new set-up between actors was in place. In addition, delays in the implementation of the new desk formula created some confusion among actors and even more among refugees.

“ When it comes to cash-based assistance, it was all delayed. The desk formula was reviewed, and households were included and excluded from the beneficiary lists. Within two days of each other, UNHCR and WFP sent out tens of thousands of SMSs, informing refugees that they were being dropped from assistance, and notifying others that they were being included in assistance. There was no kind of coordination in that and you can imagine the stress it represented for refugees.”

INGO representative

The work of Refugees Outreach Volunteers⁹ in providing reliable information to refugees was particularly useful during this period.

The only proposal submitted in response to the ECHO/DFID call was a joint one by UNHCR, WFP and two NGOs of the Lebanon Cash Consortium. These agencies considered that their set-up was compatible with, and inspired by the LOUISE joint platform. However, donors rejected the proposal and argued that it did not meet the criteria of a single cash transfer by a single agency. They also considered that there was a lack of transparency in the budget and a lack of clarity with regard to the responsibilities of the different partners. This process lasted for several months, and an agreement was finally found with WFP (first by DFID and then by ECHO) in the last quarter of 2017.

An important principle of the ECHO/DFID initiative is the establishment of an independent monitoring and evaluation (M&E) body in charge of capturing outcomes and providing evidence for programme adaptation. A donor representative explained that the technical M&E team with donors and WFP would exist alongside an external, broader M&E steering committee.

“ [This] will be a mixture of donors, WFP, academia and others working together and looking at the value for money, and looking at how best to run the cash programme. Ultimately it will bring greater accountability to beneficiaries. And that has been lacking.”

Donor representative

Delays to the new overall operational set-up have caused the new M&E steering committee to be postponed. However, once it is up and running effectively, it will be a small revolution in the humanitarian sector. It could transform relations among humanitarian actors with a new type of cooperation based on greater transparency and peer accountability and unrelated to financial dependency. It also allows other experienced cash actors who are not part of this new operational set-up to continue to be involved and influence cash-based assistance in Lebanon.

The strong leadership taken by donors in this sector is unusual. It shows that when they have a good understanding of the context and the power relations between the stakeholders involved in the response, which requires and relies on their presence in the field, donors can play a strong and direct operational role.

One donor representative voiced frustration that donors just assume the UN and other agencies are working in the best way:

“...I feel you have to have some kind of expertise, you have to be able to challenge the agencies, and ask those questions, about why they’re doing it in this way, and be part of ... sector groups, and try and understand what’s really happening, and challenge the model...”

Donor representative

3.2 Involving and being accountable to affected people and communities

3.2.1 Participation throughout the operational process

Affected people and communities can be involved in any phase of a programme. Generally speaking, people are sometimes consulted during the needs assessment phase or at the beginning of a project but are very rarely involved in project design. During the assessments, and in particular during data collection for the centralised and unified statistical calculation of vulnerability, refugees expressed their discomfort with the process and the questions asked.

“It is not nice to have someone coming to your house and asking you how many times a week you eat meat when you can't even remember the last time you had meat on your plate. I felt this wasn't right.”

Syrian refugee

It was understandable to have the data collection method based on strict quantitative questionnaires but it is still fundamental to respect the affected population's dignity and to adopt a more compassionate approach in order to gather information that people will not express directly due to cultural norms. People may be deeply reluctant to reveal how basic their needs are, even to friends:

“Every time I went to visit my friend she asked me if I wanted a drink of water, but she never brought the glass. She kept saying that she had forgotten it in the kitchen, or pretended to be busy doing something else. The first time I didn't realise, but at some point, I understood that she did not even have drinking water at home. She just couldn't afford it. I knew she was in a difficult situation but didn't realise it was that bad. I had to talk to her and I brought her here to see if she could get support.”

Palestinian refugee from Syria

Refugees also found it hard to accept that the person who collected the data from them could not confirm whether they would get assistance.

As the new formula for calculating refugee vulnerability no longer relies on household visit assessments and the context has not changed drastically, there seems to be less investment and interest by international humanitarian actors in assessments and consultations.

“ Internally, we have noticed that we do not always do consultations systematically. When we have set up activities, when a choice has to be made about where the infrastructure, the toilets, and the septic tanks will go, there is kind of an implementation model with relatively fixed standards, and we are not necessarily going to set up another focus group to really discuss with the people when we arrive in the ITS [informal tent settlement]. It is a kind of ad hoc approach, naturally with people, through discussion, by readjusting...”

INGO representative

This statistical calculation and ranking of refugees' vulnerability represents a gradual shift in humanitarian practices from a traditional case-by-case and face-to-face needs assessment approach to a centralised and completely computerized procedure, which has an impact on accountability towards beneficiaries.¹⁰

In some cases, participatory approaches seem to be lacking; as one INGO representative explained, some activities continue despite a lack of local input:

“ We maybe haven't asked people enough and people are polite and have become accepting, or even passive, in relation to international NGOs. They let us get on with it, including the things that make them smile because they are a bit absurd.”

INGO representative

In contrast, several Lebanese CSOs emphasised how important these consultations were for them and their way of operating. They mentioned that they involve the population constantly and try to take into account all types of needs and expectations.

“ Almost all our projects come from the field, from the people. People would complain a lot about something... We write questions and we go ask them. From this assessment we would know exactly what we should do. We submit a project, then the project gets approved, and then we go in and we tell them about what we are planning and how we are planning to implement this project. They would say, “No, don't do that, do this, it's better.” So they would be totally involved.”

Lebanese CSO representative

To fully implement these participatory approaches, CSOs need to dedicate significant human resources and need donor support and openness. Moreover, they mainly rely on their staff connections with the local communities.

“ We have a great base in this area. We have built a lot of relationships with the communities and we have specific committees for each area. So building on this committee, which is a Lebanese and Syrian committee, we identify the needs and then we prioritise those needs, and with the donors we design specific projects. So it's more related to those committees and people in this area through focus groups. We do a lot of focus groups, we do a lot of door-to-door assessments, and we go to the areas at night, so for us our work is to go to the café and sit with the people and start chatting.”

Lebanese CSO representative

Although less common, some INGOs also work in this way:

“ With us, it is also closely linked to the relations that staff have with communities because they increasingly work in informal camps or neighbourhoods. So there are leadership figures in the Syrian and Lebanese communities who we have quite a lot of contact with who can influence certain activities by showing us that we should be doing this or that. But this is based on individuals and personal relations. It can produce extraordinary results, but it is not necessarily systematic.”

INGO representative

Interestingly, in one case a Lebanese CSO mentioned that these consultations and their inclusive approach had led them to adopt tailored standards in their WASH sector operations instead of following the universal humanitarian SPHERE standards.

“...now UNICEF’s head of coordination is asking us to explain the benefits of changing... to standards that meet beneficiaries’ real needs and listening to the beneficiaries. And this is where LRC [Lebanese Relief Council] has done [something] special by saying we don’t design by ourselves, we listen to the needs, we listen to beneficiaries, and we want them to be part of our planning and brainstorming, because at the end what we are doing is to support them and to fulfil their needs. If we do not listen to them and see what is the preferred methodology or approach, our response will not be effective, not be efficient, and will not be sustainable.”

Lebanese CSO representative

3.2.2 Accountability to affected populations

Participation and accountability are very intertwined. As several interviewees mentioned, greater involvement of affected communities and people in the implementation of a project seemed to reduce the risk of abuse by aid workers and facilitate the reporting of such cases. One national NGO also mentioned that after reinforcing accountability through different processes, including debrief meetings, beneficiaries progressively and spontaneously took initiatives and started to push for greater involvement in project design and implementation.

Feedback and complaints mechanisms have been widely used by international and Lebanese aid actors in the form of boxes, hotlines, emails and surveys at the end of distributions and aid service delivery. These mechanisms are effectively accessible, and some, such as hotlines, are used a great deal. However, there is general confusion between feedback and complaints; for most actors, these have to be reported through the same mechanism although many have specific internal procedures to channel such information confidentially once it is raised via feedback mechanisms.

The confidentiality of complaints and their potential follow-up, and the fear of reputational risk if cases of abuse in an organisation are made known, makes it difficult to access information and assess aid actors’ accountability to affected people accordingly. However, most interviewees from INGOs and Lebanese CSOs expressed dissatisfaction regarding

the effectiveness of complaints mechanisms as very few complaints (such as over abuse or corruption) have been reported even though problems do exist. Due to this reluctance to share information about failings, there is no serious desire to establish a single hotline for complaints. However, this would be very useful as affected people often contact one organisation to report a situation that actually needs to be addressed by a different one. The difficulty of monitoring feedback and complaints referrals between actors undermines the effectiveness and credibility of these mechanisms.

“ One of [the] frustrations [that we have] is that we are not very good at closing the circle, at coming back to people after their complaints or after their questions, and saying to them, “Here is the information... here is what has been done” ...”

INGO representative

Affected people expressed their preference for face-to-face discussions to report both feedback and complaints, and they were more in favour of having a trusting relationship with an interlocutor, than dealing with an anonymous confidential mechanism. However, very few organisations have centres where people can go in person to make complaints.

Many interviewees felt powerless to deal with the mechanisms' complexity and limitations. This has become an incentive for some Lebanese actors to postpone establishing such complaints mechanisms and to set up simpler accountability processes adapted to their means and capacities.

“ [Although we have] a complaints hotline for the cash programme, we cannot say we have a fully-fledged complaints mechanism. We're quite new at this. What we have started with is having a code of conduct, training around it, and how to take action against violations of it. [This] happens on a regular basis, but it's mainly [for] internal issues.”

Lebanese CSO representative

Some local NGOs providing basic services also decided to work on the relationship between affected people and public service provision institutions and on the mutual accountability therein, for example, by formalising people's subscriptions and making the public authorities aware of their responsibilities.

3.2.3 Communication with refugees and community-based approaches

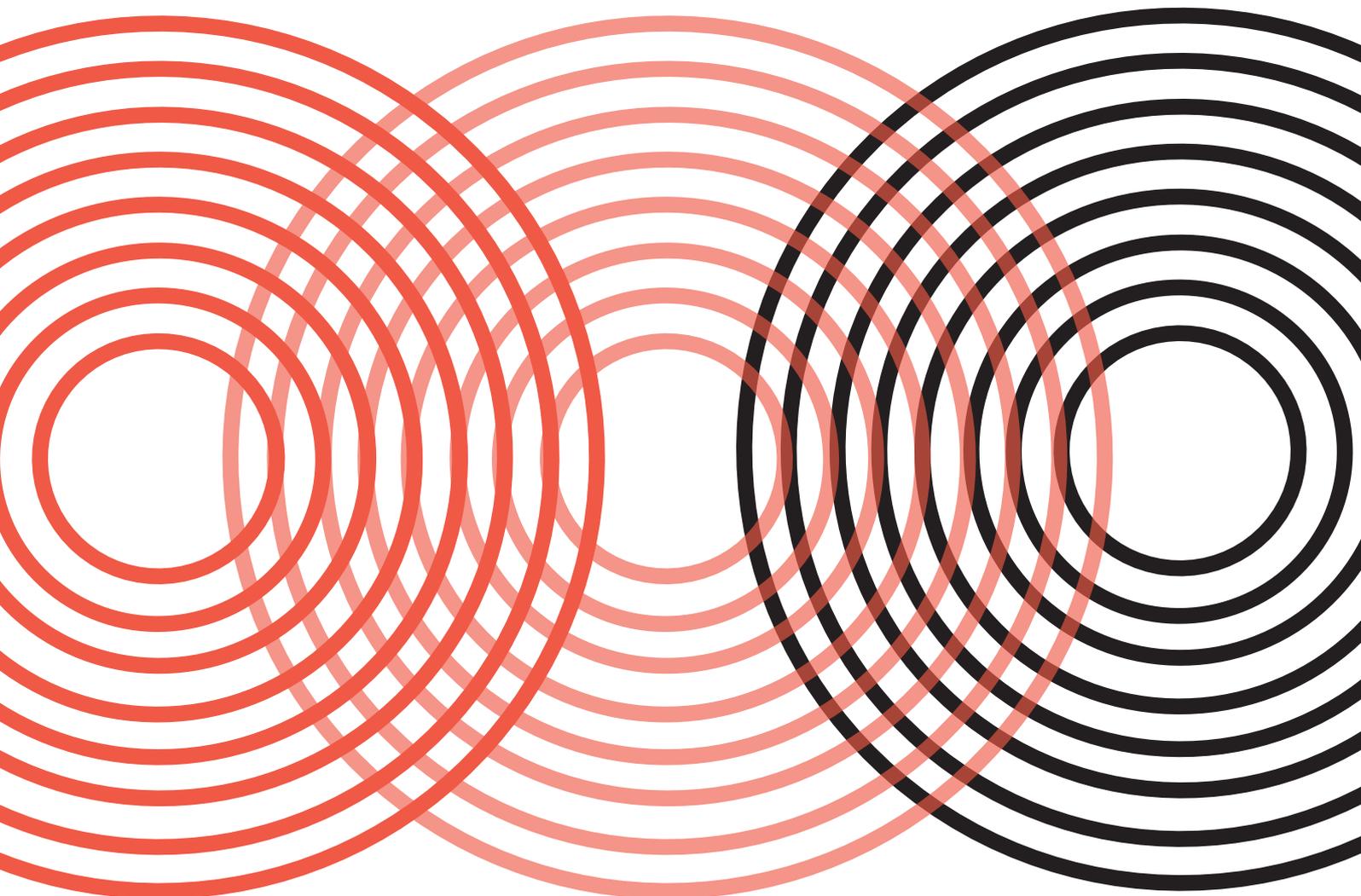
Mobile phones are widely used and have proved to be very effective for communicating with refugees and the affected population. Aid actors also use mobile phone communication to reach beneficiaries. However, mobile phone services are expensive for refugees (text messages and calls to hotlines) and SIM cards are deactivated after a few weeks of not being used, which means that the refugee then loses the registered phone number, which is particularly challenging. Consequently, the use of social media and applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook appear to be a good medium for refugees as they can access it through their mobile, they can use the same number even if the SIM is lost or deactivated and they save money by using internet connections rather than sending text messages.

Aside from technology, face-to-face communication remains fundamental. Focal points and committees are often in place either per community or per project. However, their representativeness varies considerably and is a politically sensitive issue. The Lebanese authorities often refuse to allow refugees to establish representative committees or political organisations as they do not want them to become politically organised due to their experience with Palestinian refugee organisations.

For this reason, and to promote social stability, organisations sometimes establish mixed committees. The legitimacy of focal points can also vary a great deal, as some of them are community or religious leaders, or even local authority representatives. Paradoxically, working closely with the local public authorities, who generally seek to have a greater role in the response, can lead to greater restrictions on involving the population (host communities and/or refugees). When they have the opportunity to take part in a project, municipalities sometimes prefer to use the project to gain legitimacy or to assert their authority rather than to put in place a participatory approach that they are unable or unwilling then to extend to all of their actions. Moreover, some municipalities tolerate refugees more than they welcome them (setting up curfews, for instance). These public authorities consider that Syrians are already favoured compared to the Lebanese population and do not wish to strengthen their participation in projects.¹¹

There are obvious benefits for aid organisations in having a single interlocutor in the community. Affected populations, who often have to deal with a large number of organisations and interlocutors, would also benefit from this, as some affected interviewees in Lebanon pointed out.

Refugee Outreach Volunteers is a joint initiative by refugees and UNHCR whereby approximately 1,000 outreach volunteers across the country provide the other refugees with information and serve as a link between them and UNHCR. They carry out door-to-door visits and are also present in UNHCR's centres for face-to-face interaction, which is very important. These Refugee Outreach Volunteers also use social media to communicate with refugees and run a Facebook page. One of their roles is to confirm or contradict the veracity of information received by refugees. Unfortunately, this initiative remains limited and has not yet been adopted in many refugee communities.



4 Impacts and conclusion

4.1 Linking the crisis response to long-term development

4.1.1 Ambiguous integration into the Lebanese system

The distinction between humanitarian and development aid has been very narrow in this unusual and protracted response. It involves a lot of basic service provision to both refugees and vulnerable members of the host population, which is partly provided by Lebanese institutions. The LCRP has been designed as an integrated humanitarian and stabilisation strategy. However, the fact that there has been no clear vision for the future of the Syrian crisis (at least in recent years), the lack of a shared political position on Syrian refugees within the Lebanese government, and the shared leadership of the response across different stakeholders makes this situation unpredictable and complicates the implementation of a relevant response based on durable solutions. After seven years of response, no alternative solution has yet been found in several sectors to replace the costly, recurring, short-term humanitarian operations that have been implemented to date to meet immediate, essential needs.

Health assistance to Syrian refugees is provided within the Lebanese health system, which is largely privatised. Private clinics (which can be primary, secondary and/or tertiary health centres) coexist with public hospitals and NGO primary health centres (not always distinguishable from private ones).

A UN representative described the hybrid situation that has evolved:

“Here, there aren't any camps, and the camps you have are not actual camps. They are informal settlements, because they don't have the services, they don't have clinics, there's no water systems, there's nothing. So, it meant that refugees could only have access to national institutions, services, and yet the government would say, “We will not integrate them”, or, “We will not include them in the national programme”... So, we had to invent a system where people are integrated, and yet it's all paid for by the international community.”

The massive increase in the population living in the country has pushed up the numbers of patients being treated within the Lebanese health system, putting pressures on its basic services.

“ The challenge here is that we provide these services, except outside the Syria crisis, as a general day-to-day service. With the Syria crisis we’ve had to scale these up. For example, primary health services, mobile clinics are funded, but it’s very difficult to find funding for basic services that have an increased demand as a result of adding a million people – 30% of the population of the country. It’s very difficult to get funding for that, because this is seen as a basic public service. This is the fundamental flaw in the rationale, in our opinion. Same for blood, you have 25%, 30% more people, then you need more blood, but for some reason this is not funded, this is difficult to fund as part of the Syrian crisis response. ”

Lebanese CSO

Syrian refugees can access healthcare for different medical services, such as medical consultations, prescriptions, laboratory tests, immunisations, reproductive health services, mental health treatment or life-saving medical care. However, refugees are often denied treatment for chronic and non-communicable diseases unless they are in a very serious situation. Unfortunately, when their situation deteriorates and they return for treatment, it is sometimes too late to treat them effectively and save them. The cost of treating chronic and non-communicable diseases is the main constraint to a broader and better response to refugees’ medical needs. However, wider medical coverage for refugees would also have created more tensions with the host population. Vulnerable Lebanese people face the same health issues and use the same health facilities as Syrians but do not have access to medical insurance of this kind. Efforts have been made to homogenise the health assistance to refugees and the support provided by the state to vulnerable Lebanese people. In this sense it shows the humanitarian response’s capacity to adapt to this particular migration crisis and mitigate the risk of social tensions. Nonetheless, some believe it is not the mandate of the humanitarian sector to develop the public healthcare system of a middle-income country and a balance has to be found between providing refugees with relevant assistance on the one hand and supporting vulnerable Lebanese people and social stability between communities on the other.

Similarly, while most actors recognise the need for basic assistance and/or livelihoods, they do not always agree about the best way to provide these. Differences of opinion often depend on the actor’s mandate and identity. Basic assistance through cash transfer has become the main aid channel to refugees, and is one of the big success stories of the humanitarian sector in this response.

However, cash transfer is also a form of assistance that creates particular tensions with host communities (even if the money is being spent locally). ‘The vulnerability criteria is so similar between the vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees,’ a Lebanese CSO representative explained, adding: ‘So a lot of tension has occurred, like: “the Syrians are getting all the assistance”, “we aren’t getting anything”, “they are taking our jobs”.’

Many Lebanese actors, in particular the national and local authorities, are reluctant to provide refugees with the right to work as there is already a high unemployment rate within the Lebanese population. Local authorities argue that they want investment in assistance to refugees to benefit the local economy and to bring sustainable collective improvement to the situation. Municipalities usually appreciate punctual livelihoods interventions that consist of cash-for-work for refugees. Agencies collaborate with local authorities to decide what community services are needed and then pay refugees to do the work (e.g. cleaning the streets). However, these operations often fall under social stability activities and do not provide refugees with a sustainable livelihood. The main impact of such operations seems to be to enhance local authorities and improve the image of refugees in the eyes of the population.

The relevance of the assistance provided therefore depends not only on the needs but also on the environment and how such assistance will be used and affect the living conditions of beneficiaries in the specific context. For example, several actors pointed out how professional training, provided on a massive scale, has limited relevance to refugees’ livelihoods, due to their very limited access to job opportunities.

“ There have been a lot of professional training courses and now there is a lot of investment in micro, small and medium enterprises, but this is mainly for the Lebanese and in line with the government and the Ministry of the Economy’s strategy to encourage the entrepreneur network in the broadest sense of the term ...but I am not sure about the effectiveness, particularly for the Syrians, because there are such legal constraints. ”

INGO representative

While sustainable livelihoods are recognised by all as an important need, no appropriate form of assistance has yet been found that addresses this legal constraint:

“ I see gaps in the fact that as long as Syrian refugees are not able to have access to employment opportunities, we will still always rely on humanitarian aid, which primarily comes through basic assistance, whether it's through cash or through other forms. So, I don't want to call it a gap or a failure for the humanitarian [system], but more of a political situation that's not allowing us to move forward with that. ”

INGO representative

The same challenge applies to the WASH sector. International aid actors continue to provide water by trucking, and sanitation activities in ITS mainly consist of septic tank de-sludging and hygiene awareness sessions. The most needed and efficient response would be to connect national water and sanitation networks to these settlements, but the Lebanese government is strictly opposed to this solution out of fear that this might repeat the Palestinian refugee experience in Lebanon.¹² Several actors consider that organisations should no longer be working in this 'emergency mode'. Yet, no alternative solution has been found to move towards durable solutions. Humanitarian actors seem to be stuck in an enduring but unsustainable response.

“ It's all very well thinking about stabilisation but in the meantime everyone is opting out of continuing to finance things that, admittedly, are not very attractive in the informal camps. Each year, continuing to pay the trucks to empty septic tanks and bringing clean water, etc. Yes, there is more interest and more willingness on the part of humanitarian actors and donors to prove to their interlocutors in the Lebanese government that they have invested in infrastructure, etc.... But humanitarian needs haven't gone away. ”

INGO representative

4.2 A difficult path towards long-term development

Due to the nature of this protracted response, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between humanitarian and development interventions. For many years, and to some extent still now, a major challenge to plotting the path from humanitarian to development aid has been that different actors involved have different understandings of the situation. As a Lebanese CSO representative explained, ‘you don’t have one single organisation doing only humanitarian aid, or doing only development aid; most of the Lebanese NGOs are doing both’ – whereas the international NGOs operate very differently.

Although the LCRP is dedicated to both emergency and stability objectives, and despite a great deal of willingness and some initiatives, it has been difficult to establish links between humanitarian and development actors. ‘Humanitarian and development actors are two separate worlds,’ according to an INGO representative who described how donors have attempted to forge links: ‘It takes up to 18 months to sign the contracts that are promised to the different organisations.’ Another could not recall development actors being present at coordination meetings.

There is great concern about a major decrease in humanitarian funding, in particular in relation to refugees returning to Syria. One INGO representative said it was seen as ‘certain’ that once a number of donors think refugees can return to Syria, they will cut funding here in Lebanon. ‘Everyone is beginning to talk about returns, even though a lot of actors agree that the first returns that took place didn’t really take place in conditions that we could call voluntary’, the INGO representative said.

Humanitarian donors’ moves to disengage, despite the ongoing crisis, clearly underpin humanitarian actors’ desire to see development donors get more involved in the situation.

“ It’s a chronic crisis, there are going to be needs. We are not going to be able to stay. We have to attract development donors who are here for the longer term. Let’s build something stronger that encourages donors other than humanitarian ones to invest because we know that we need more than 12 months of visibility, we need a lot of money, and that in 10 years maybe the people will still be here. ”

Donor representative

The link between the response and longer-term development donors is still very weak. ‘If we’re talking about UNDP, if we’re talking about ILO, if we’re talking World Bank, you can start seeing them coming on line now, but they have different mandates – that’s where I feel like sometimes there’s a link that’s missing,’ an INGO representative noted.

Several organisations are also trying, at their own level, to both guarantee their humanitarian assistance and adapt their interventions towards more sustainable solutions.

“ The long-term strategy for us is to manage to secure funding, to keep on with the humanitarian response. I mean, we need money to purchase drugs, we need money to purchase notebooks, and this kind of thing, but trying, as much as possible, to have at the same time, development projects. What we’re trying to do is to have small pilots, but that’s very energy-consuming, where people would generate their own incomes, so that they are less reliant on us, or on external aid. So, for instance, we supported a group of women. They created their women cooperatives, but, you know, it’s very limited, it’s very micro, all those things. But we are trying as much as possible ... to push for this, so that we can cope, very marginally, with the reduction of aid. ”

Lebanese CSO representative

The fact that the LCRP allowed the emergency plan to be integrated with the stabilisation strategy is usually seen as an advantage for more connectedness between the humanitarian and the development worlds. However, promoting stability has also contributed to maintaining a certain status quo rather than implementing ambitious transformative measures. ‘Now it’s a bit of a stuck position ... stabilisation is one thing, but it’s not yet development, and there is no natural, or evident path, from this agenda – even if it includes different sectors – to a development one,’ according to a donor representative.

“ There is no guarantee that building on the LCRP model will attract the right donors and lead to a resilience and development dynamic that will durably improve the situation.

People are seeing that the LCRP is working, so, “It’s a plan that works, so let’s just add to that plan.” Which isn’t right. Expand it to an all-encompassing big plan. If that happens, I think it’s never going to work. It’s going to be too big to deal with. ”

Donor representative

4.3 Broader impacts of the response

4.3.1 Dependency of and impact on the local economy

Despite the fact that it is a middle-income country, Lebanon has become increasingly dependent on aid since the beginning of the crisis. The Syrian refugee population is directly dependent on aid, and particularly on cash-based assistance, which represents the main source of income for many of them.

The Lebanese economy has also become dependent on international aid at different levels. The job market has been strongly impacted by the response. Many Lebanese people have found jobs in connection with the response in state institutions, UN agencies, INGOs and Lebanese CSOs. The lack of other opportunities for employees reinforces this dependency. Moreover, the level of salaries paid in international organisations (or ministries supported by the UN) is considerably higher than those in the local job market. This begs the question of what happens to these employees when the crisis ends.

“ A salary of \$3,000 in la Bekaa was unthinkable 10 years ago ... And it's great for those who get these salaries, but we have created a crazy difference in the level of salaries. Which has attracted people who did not have a vocation in the humanitarian sector. Where are they going to work afterwards? ”

INGO representative

The response has also created an 'economic boom' in certain areas. In the city of Kobayat (Akkar, North Lebanon) for example, markets have developed to meet demand from humanitarian staff and refugees using their cash-based assistance. It has also had a major positive, indirect impact on the local economy through the forms of aid used to assist Syrian refugees, according to some:

“ ...if you look at the money that has come through the local market, when you provide cash assistance, or when you provide things like the shelter programme, it's huge. Look at how much money has gone through the e-vouchers, and these e-vouchers can only be used in Lebanese shops. So, broadly, on the Lebanese economy, it has, I think, created turnover and movement and injection of cash. So, that, I think, would be the effect of a response that uses the local economy, rather than one where you import your aid and then you distribute it. ”

INGO representative

With the poorest Syrians being hosted by the poorest Lebanese communities, the assistance provided to the most vulnerable refugees has probably indirectly contributed to alleviating the economic burden of their hospitality. However, the persistent increase in the number of people living under the poverty line is worrying, particularly with the prospect of a net decrease in funding and a shift of focus to assistance within Syria.

4.3.2 Transforming civil society

The response has also impacted the Lebanese civil society landscape. Certain NGOs have grown and there has been a proliferation of new organisations. These have gained from this experience in terms of knowledge transfer and capacity development. This process has evolved throughout the response. Initially, it only focused on training that was decided and provided by international actors to their local partners within the scope of a specific project. Several Lebanese CSOs said they now have a capacity development strategy and manage the budget line dedicated to capacity development in each project accordingly. This is one aspect of a more general trend towards empowering Lebanese CSOs.

“What works well is that we have much more ownership, we integrate capacity-building and all the funding within this. We don't go for short-term projects anymore, and several partners are going through towards this longer-term approach, so these are things that worked quite well.”

Lebanese CSO representative

The response by the international humanitarian system has also had negative impacts on CSOs, including depriving them of their human resources. A Lebanese CSO representative explained how higher salaries at INGOs lured the ‘stars’ from the local NGOs, leaving them very much weakened – a situation that ‘completely undermines the local NGO’.

Lebanese staff working for international organisations have improved their knowledge and competencies tremendously thanks to a great deal of training and professional experience. But the disparities between international and local salaries mean they are highly unlikely to resume work for local CSOs or public institutions once the response ends.

The response to this crisis has also affected the missions, activities and focus of Lebanese civil society. Most CSOs involved in the response were not initially humanitarian actors but rather were working on longer-term development projects. One INGO representative described a national organisation that they worked with in partnership.

“ They are interested in development projects but the financial gain, the availability of funds for humanitarian action have meant that they have put their development mandate to one side. Another Palestinian organisation that we worked with, I think they were more interested in development projects. There was no funding, so they began doing vouchers. ”

At the time of the research, several major Lebanese CSOs were developing their long-term strategy, which involved starting to take part in other international humanitarian responses.

Some interviewees voiced concerns about how the response was transforming the identity of civil society. ‘CSOs used to be committed to promoting a certain vision for the development of their community and/or territory and society. But now they only run after money, going from one project to another, from one sector to another depending on where they find funds,’ a Lebanese CSO representative said. Another warned about a loss of variety among local organisations. ‘Lebanese organisations implement the projects of others, the way they are told to do so. It’s like... they are becoming very homogenous and I’m not sure this is really what is needed for Lebanon.’

A healthy and dynamic civil society committed to the development of the country might not depend on its neutrality but rather on its diversity, reflecting that of the Lebanese population. ‘It’s like when international actors accuse us of not being neutral. This is almost funny. We are not meant to be neutral, but rather committed to whatever social or political cause,’ explained a Lebanese CSO representative.

Endnotes

1. The Taif Agreement is the agreement that put an end to the civil war (1975–1990). The faith-based division of power based on demography was meant to be a transition phase, but it continues to be applied today.
2. 164 refugees under UNHCR mandate per 1,000 population and 250 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants when including Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate (UNHCR, 2018).
3. Moreover, most Syrian refugees are Sunni Muslims and considered potential opponents to the Syrian regime and its allies in Lebanon.
4. After more than 60 years, more than 448,000 Palestinians are living in Lebanon. This includes the Palestinian refugees who fled the 1948 war and their descendants who are also considered as refugees. Palestinians have limited basic rights in particular to work and own property. Some 53% of Palestinians reside in the 12 camps across the country in harsh conditions and with very limited perspective for their future. Most Palestinian camps are neighbourhoods geographically integrated into the city, however, almost all services in the camps are provided by Palestinian and international organisations targeting Palestinian refugees (although non-Palestinian inhabitants of the camps also access those services). Camps are controlled by various Palestinian armed forces while the Lebanese armed forces are banned from entering but control the entrances through checkpoints. The issue of Palestinians' presence and Palestinian camps is associated with the civil war during which Palestinian militias took part in the conflict and three camps were destroyed. It is also considered by some political actors and authorities as a security challenge and/or a threat to the fragile balance of religious and ethnic communities in the country.
5. These NGOs provide rare services but are usually free of charge.
6. The Humanitarian Country Team is a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum composed of representatives from the UN, international NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, governmental bodies and agencies that are designated leads of specific working groups.
7. LCC: The Lebanon Cash Consortium; ACF: Action Contre la Faim; LSESD: Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development; MCC: Mennonite Central Committee; HH: household.
8. Mostly from the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers and the Grand Bargain.
9. See section 3.2 on involving and being accountable to affected people and communities.
10. See section 2.1.3 Targeting methodology and challenges.
11. Source: refugee leader, main authority in informal camp settlements.
12. See endnote iv for background on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Bibliography

Abdel Samad, Z. and Moshini, B. (2016) *Humanitarian assistance in Lebanon overview, challenges and recommendations: Revisiting the humanitarian system: the call for country ownership in the case of Lebanon*. *Furn el-Chebbak: Lebanon Support*. (<https://civilsociety-centre.org/sites/default/files/resources/humanitarianassistancelebanon-overviewchallengesrecommendations-ls2016.pdf>).

ACTED, CARE, Solidarités International, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, World Vision. (2017) *Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC): Community-based targeting report*. (<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/community-based-targeting-report.pdf>).

Al Jazairi, L. (2016) *A future in the balance. How the conflict in Syria is impacting on the needs, concerns and aspirations of young people across the Middle East*. Oslo: NRC. (<https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/a-future-in-the-balance---syria.pdf>).

Bailey, S. and Harvey, P. (2017) *The DFID/ECHO approach to cash assistance for refugees in Lebanon: documenting the process*. Working Paper 525, London: Overseas Development Institute. (<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11899.pdf>).

Boustani, M., Carpi, E., Gebara, H. and Mourad, Y. (2016) *Responding to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon: Collaboration between aid agencies and local governance structures*. London: IIED. (<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10799IIED.pdf>).

Caccavale, O., Flämig, T. and Laliq, M. (2015) *Exploring food assistance programme: Evidence for Lebanon*. Rome: World Food Programme. (https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp278453.pdf?_ga=2.112678340.1536950642.1547464301-2048737328.1547464301)

Care, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, International Rescue Committee, US Institute of Peace, Save The Children US, WFP and US Fund for UNICEF. (2016) *A world at risk: Humanitarian response at a crossroads*. Rome: World Food Programme. (https://www.wfpusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/wfp_policy_paper_crossroads_wfp.pdf).

Cités Unies France. (2015) *Les autorités locales dans la gestion des crises*. Paris: Cités Unies France.

Creti, P. (2015) *Evaluation of the OneCard Pilot in Lebanon*. Rome: World Food Programme. (<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-onecard-pilot-evaluation-web.pdf>).

- Dionigi, F. (2016) *The Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon. State fragility and social resilience*. London: London School of Economics – Middle East Centre. (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65565/1/Dionigi_Syrian_Refugees%20in%20Lebanon_Author_2016.pdf).
- Drummond, J., Khoury, R., Bailey, S., Crawford, N., Fan, L., Milhem, R. and Zyck, S. (2015) *WFP's regional response to the Syria crisis, 2011–2014*. Rome: World Food Programme. (<https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp274337.pdf>).
- Dyke, J. (2015) 'Les Syriens pourraient perdre leur statut de réfugiés'. *IRINnews*, 16 March. (www.irinnews.org/fr/report/101248/les-syriens-pourraient-perdre-leur-statut-de-r%C3%A9fugi%C3%A9-au-liban).
- El-Hadj, A.-M. (2016) 'La marginalisation des réfugiés syriens, un facteur de déstabilisation sécuritaire, met en garde Nadim Houry'. *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 1 February. (<https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/967866/-la-marginalisation-des-refugies-syriens-un-facteur-de-déstabilisation-securitaire-met-en-garde-nadim-houry.html>).
- Fakhreldine, L. (2015) 'International aid lags for Lebanon's displaced'. *Al-Monitor*, 12 January. (<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2015/01/international-aid-syrian-refugees-lebanon-lags.html>)
- Forced Migration Review. (2016) 'Local communities: first and last providers of protection'. *Forced Migration Review*, Issue 53, October 2016. (<https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/community-protection.pdf>).
- World Bank Group. (n.d.) *Global Concessional Financing Facility*. Washington D.C.: World Bank Group. (<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/222001475547774765/FlyerGlobalCFF.pdf>).
- Government of Lebanon and the United Nations. (2014) *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015–2016*. Beirut: Government of Lebanon, United Nations. (https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/2015-2016_Lebanon_CRP_EN.pdf).
- Government of Lebanon and the United Nations. (2018) *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020*. Beirut: Government of Lebanon, United Nations. (<https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/LCRP-EN-2018.pdf>).
- Grom, E. and Chahine, T. (2017) 'Applying Social Enterprise to Refugee Settings'. *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 15(4). (https://ssir.org/articles/entry/applying_social_enterprise_to_refugee_settings)
- Ground Truth Solutions. (2017) *Refugee perceptions in Lebanon, Survey round two*. Vienna: Ground Truth Solutions. (<http://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MMP-Lebanon-Survey-Round-Two.pdf>).

Grünewald, F., Brangeon, S. and Karroum, N. (2017) *Collective commitment to enhance accountability and transparency in emergencies: Lebanon report*. Berlin: Transparency International. (file:///C:/12110S_Data/AssistURD_LSauzet_URD/Bureau/2017_CREATE_Lebanon_EN.pdf).

Human Rights Watch. (2016) 'Liban : la réglementation du droit de séjour met les réfugiés syriens en danger'. [website]. 12 January. (<https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2016/01/12/liban-la-reglementation-du-droit-de-sejour-met-les-refugies-syriens-en-danger>).

Human Rights Watch. (2017) *Following the money: lack of transparency in donor funding for Syrian refugee education*. New York: Human Rights Watch. (https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/crdsyrianrefugees0917_web_2.pdf).

IMF. (2010) *Report for selected countries: Lebanon*. Washington D.C.: IMF. (<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2010/cr10282.pdf>).

Jalkh, J. (2016) 'La peur au ventre les réfugiés syriens ne savent plus à quel saint se vouer'. *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 4 March. (<https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/973685/la-peur-au-ventre-les-refugies-syriens-ne-savent-pas-a-quel-saint-se-vouer.html>).

Karroum, N. (2017) *La relocalisation de l'aide internationale dans l'agglomération de Tripoli*. Plaisians, France: Groupe URD. (<https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/relocalisation-de-l-aide-tripoli.pdf>).

Khawaja, B. (2017) *The gaps in Lebanon's new refugee policy*. New York: Human Rights Watch. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/14/gaps-lebanons-new-refugee-policy>).

Khoder, P. (2016) 'Réfugiés syriens : le fardeau que porte le Liban est réellement gigantesque'. *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 18 April. (<https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/981528/refugies-syriens-le-fardeau-que-porte-le-liban-est-reellement-gigantesque.html>).

Lyles, E. and Doocy, S. (2015) *Syrian refugee and affected host population health access survey in Lebanon*. Baltimore, US: The Centre for Refugee and Disaster Response at Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and Médecins du Monde. (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/44869>).

Metcalf, V., Manuel, M. and McKechnie, A. (2016) *Enhancing aid architecture in the regional response to the Syrian crisis*. London: ODI. (<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10273.pdf>).

- Mitri, D. (2014) *Challenges of aid coordination in a complex crisis: An overview of funding policies and conditions regarding aid provision to Syrian refugees in Lebanon*. Furn el-Chebbak: Civil Society Knowledge Centre, Lebanon Support. (<http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/challenges-aid-coordination-complex-crisis>).
- Moghnieh, L., El-Khazen, E., Yammine, L. and AbiYaghi, M-N. (2016) *The role of community-based organisations in preparing and responding to crisis in Lebanon. A qualitative study*. Furn el-Chebbak: Lebanon Support. (<https://civilsociety-centre.org/sites/default/files/resources/role-communitybasedorganizations-response-crisis-lebanon.pdf>).
- Mourad, L. and Piron, L. (2016) *Municipal service delivery, stability, social cohesion and legitimacy in Lebanon*. Beirut: AUB. (<http://publications.dlprog.org/Lebanon%20Analytical%20Literature%20Review.pdf>).
- OCHA. (2017) *Country snapshot for 2017. Financial Tracking Service*. (<https://fts.unocha.org/countries/124/summary/2017>).
- OCHA. (2018) *Country snapshot for 2018. Financial Tracking Service*. (<https://fts.unocha.org/countries/124/summary/2018>).
- Republic of Lebanon. (2016) *London Conference – Lebanon Statement of Intent*. Beirut: Government of Lebanon (<https://2c8kkt1ykog81j8k9p47oglb-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Supporting-Syria-the-Region-London-2016-Lebanon-Statement.pdf>).
- Rhayem, R. (2015) ‘Comblent l’écart dans l’expertise humanitaire au Liban’. Sphere Project. (<https://www.caritas.org/2015/07/comblent-lecart-dans-leexpertise-humanitaire-au-liban/?lang=fr>).
- Rushdi, S. (2015) *Stabilization and resilience in protracted, politically induced emergencies: A case study exploration of Lebanon*. New York: UNDP. (https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Mercy%20Corps_Stabilization%20%26%20Resilience%20Study.pdf).
- Saavedra, L. (2016) *We know our wounds: national and local organisations involved in humanitarian response in Lebanon*. London: ALNAP. (<https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/alnap-nngos-lebanon.pdf>).
- Sethi, S., Jonsson, R., Skaff, R. and Tyler, F. (2017) ‘Community-based non-communicable disease care for Syrian refugees in Lebanon’. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, September 2017, 5(3): 495–506. (www.ghspjournal.org/content/ghsp/5/3/495.full.pdf).

The Boston Consulting Group. (2017) *Food-restricted voucher or unrestricted cash? How to best support Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon?* Rome: World Food Programme. (<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000068827/download>).

The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. (2016) *The repercussions of the Syrian refugee crisis on Lebanon: The challenges of providing services and creating jobs*. Beirut: LCPS. (www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1453288522-syrian_refugee_crisis_web.pdf).

UNDP. (2015) *Impact of humanitarian aid on the Lebanese economy*. Beirut: UNDP Lebanon. (<https://www.rescuerefugees.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Impact-of-Humanitarian-Aid-UNDP-UNHCR.pdf>).

UNHCR. (2016a) *3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2016-2017. Mid Year Report, June 2016*, 2016. Geneva: UNHCR. (<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/3RPMid-yearReportJune2016.pdf>).

UNHCR. (2016b) *Lebanon post-distribution monitoring report: Cash-based interventions in Lebanon (Jan–Mar 2016)*. Geneva: UNHCR. (<https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/43247>).

UNHCR (2018) *Global trends Forced displacement in 2017*. Geneva: UNHCR. (<https://www.unhcr.org/dach/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2018/06/GlobalTrends2017.pdf>)

UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF. (2015) *Vulnerability assessments of Syrian refugees (VASyR) in Lebanon*. Beirut: WFP. (<https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp280798.pdf>)

Verme, P., Gigliarano, C., Wieser, C., Hedlund, K., Petzoldt, M. and Santacroce, M. (2016) *The welfare of Syrian refugees: Evidence from Jordan and Lebanon*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank. (<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/9781464807701.pdf>).

World Bank. (2015) Lebanon GDP Growth. [website]. (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=EG>).

World Humanitarian Summit. (2015) *Preparatory Stakeholders' Analysis: World Humanitarian Summit Regional Consultation for the Middle East and North Africa*. Istanbul: World Humanitarian Summit. (<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MENA%20Stakeholder%20Analysis%20Report%20%5BEnglish%5D.pdf>).

World Humanitarian Summit. (2016) The grand bargain. A shared commitment to better serve people in need. New York: Agenda for Humanity. (https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf).

3RP. (2017) *Regional refugee and resilience plan in response to the Syria Crisis. 2017 Progress Report*. Geneva: UNHCR. (www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/3RP-Progress-Report-17102017-final.pdf).

