



INFORMING TARGETED HOST COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING IN LEBANON

SECONDARY DATA REVIEW

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OCHA

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SUMMARY

As the Syria conflict enters its fourth year, the number of refugees settling in neighbouring countries continues to rise. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an estimated 1,055,393 registered refugees from Syria reside in Lebanon.¹ The influx of refugees from Syria, which constitutes 20 per cent of the total population living in Lebanon, has had a tremendous impact on the demographic, socioeconomic and security situation in the country. The 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6) reported that 86 per cent of refugees have relocated to communities hosting 66 per cent of the most vulnerable Lebanese populations.² The presence of refugees has affected the resilience of host communities, particularly in terms of accessing basic services and public infrastructure, as well as social cohesion within communities already affected by sectarian divisions.

This secondary data review report was conducted during the inception phase of an assessment carried out by REACH Initiative in partnership with the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2014. This larger study aims to inform host community programming in Lebanon through the participatory identification of vulnerabilities and factors that undermine community resilience and social cohesion. In terms of information management, this assessment hopes to fill a major information gap in regards to community vulnerabilities as they pertain to refugee and host community populations.

This report provides a review of secondary data and information available on the social, economic and political impact of the refugee influx on host communities with a specific focus on the principal vectors of tension within these communities in the context of the Syria crisis. This review draws on findings from studies conducted by UN agencies, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and national and international think tanks; articles published in the Lebanese and international media; and interviews conducted with national and international NGO practitioners in Lebanon. Additionally, a rapid stakeholder analysis contributes primary data from humanitarian organisations active in country. The data gives a comprehensive picture of the humanitarian interventions to date across Lebanon, targeting both refugees and host communities. The results of this analysis complement the findings of the secondary data review and corroborate some of the conclusions drawn in regard to host community vulnerabilities.

For the purposes of this report, vulnerability refers to the ability of communities to withstand and adapt to shocks and stresses brought on by external and internal conditions. Particular focus is placed on factors affecting community resilience and social cohesion. This study is further focused on vulnerabilities of host community and displaced populations in Lebanese communities. In line with target population groups outlined in the RRP6, host community populations refer to long resident Lebanese residents as well as Palestine refugees from Lebanon (PRL) while displaced groups include Syrian refugees, Lebanese returnees and Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS).

This secondary data review revealed significant information gaps across the country, which may be hindering humanitarian and development planning. Across all regions, there seems to be little or no available information regarding access to and the status of health service provision. Another major information gap includes data pertaining to specific protection groups, including PRS, women and children. There are also considerable information gaps specific to UNHCR operational areas. There is a general scarcity of information regarding the provision of basic services in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, South and Tripoli + T5. In Beirut and Mount Lebanon, no data was found in regards to health service provision, education and electricity supply. In South operational area, there was no information found regarding education services and limited data on health care provision, and water and sanitation services.

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>. Accessed on 19 June 2014.

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (2013)

In Tripoli + T5, available data refers almost exclusively to the city of Tripoli. There was little information regarding shelter, electricity and waste management issues.

A review of available data, reports and assessments confirm that the impact of the refugee influx in Lebanon has been significant both in macroeconomic and human development terms. According to the 2008 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) national poverty assessment, **nearly 1 million Lebanese (27 per cent of the total Lebanese population) were living on less than US\$4 per day before the onset of the Syria crisis.** Due to the economic impact of the Syrian refugee influx, **between 170,000 and 200,000 additional Lebanese are expected to fall below the poverty line by the end of 2014** with already poor families suffering from increased levels of vulnerability.

The Syrian conflict is having a direct impact on key economic sectors, such as tourism, banking and real-estate as well as an indirect impact by lowering economic activity. This has resulted in a loss in government revenue collection since 2012. At the same time, government expenditures are expected to rise due to an increase in public service demand. This will widen the gap between government revenue and public expenditure, reducing the capacity of Lebanon to reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio.

Recent assessments, reports and media articles attribute problems with public service delivery and higher costs of living to the impact of the on-going conflict in neighbouring Syria. Since the onset of the Syria crisis, the number of displaced seeking refuge in Lebanon rose sharply particularly in late 2013. **These recent demographic pressures on Lebanese hosting communities have been linked to frequent power outages and water shortages.** The production of waste has doubled in some places, particularly around tented settlements, and is at risk of contaminating groundwater supply and drinking water.

In addition, **private and public hospitals, health care centres and ambulatory clinics are overwhelmed by higher demand on the health infrastructure.** A rise in health care prices, shortage in the supply of medicine and limited capacity of health care providers has made it difficult for many Lebanese to access adequate health services. Hospitals and health facilities are particularly overstrained in Akkar, Bekaa and Tripoli + T5, due to poor infrastructure and inadequate staffing that predate the Syria refugee crisis.

The influx of Syrian refugee children has also raised demand for education services, which has increased government spending and adversely affected the quality of public education. Given the patterns of displacement, most refugee students have registered in Akkar, Bekaa and Tripoli + T5, areas already suffering from inadequate school infrastructure and poor quality of education. Many schools have introduced a second shift in the afternoon to accommodate the surplus in students but inadequate staffing and difficulty for Syrian students in adapting to the Lebanese curriculum interfere with the learning process.

The refugee influx has also been linked to a rise in living costs, specifically for accommodation and food. **An increase in demand for shelter has caused a rise in rental prices and is forcing many Lebanese to move out in search of more affordable housing options.** This is creating resentment among locals, particularly in Bekaa, where competition for housing is highest. These negative attitudes are exacerbated by the fact that many poor Lebanese, living in the same or worse conditions as refugees, are only receiving limited assistance from the Government of Lebanon (GoL) or international and national NGOs. Moreover, there have **been reports of higher food prices as a result of the population increase and greater demand.** However, national level inflation figures do not reflect the reported pressures on domestic prices. Border towns, where the population is no longer able to cross into Syria to buy cheaper products, are particularly affected. This is reducing purchasing power, particularly in poor households that also suffer from increased competition for employment and decreasing wages.

Numerous studies point out the **significant impact of the refugee influx on Lebanese communities' livelihoods, specifically for those engaged in semi-skilled and unskilled employment**. Agricultural and construction workers are facing the greatest competition from unskilled Syrian refugee workers, particularly in Akkar, Bekaa and Tripoli + T5. **Wages have fallen and shifts have been reduced, creating an income gap for the poorest**. Some local businesses are benefiting from the availability of cheap labour but others have reported difficulties due to competition from newly open Syrian businesses that operate without permits, hire Syrian workers for less pay and avoid taxes. The influx of refugees is expected to increase the labour supply by 30 to 50 per cent. It is thought that 220,000 to 324,000 more Lebanese will be left without a job, doubling the unemployment rate.

The findings of this secondary data review confirm that the impact of the refugee influx varies greatly by region. **Variances mainly depend on the density of refugees in each area, the pre-existing necessities of hosting communities and the capacity of communities and local governments to respond effectively to the crisis**. Consequently, host communities in different regions have diverse experiences of, and reactions to, the refugee crisis. For example, in the South, the relatively low number of refugees has had minimal effects on the provision of services and access to employment. On the other hand, in Bekaa and Tripoli, already poor communities are facing increased competition for jobs and struggling to cope with the hike in prices for basic food and non-food items, scarcity of water and strained health services. Equally, host communities in different regions have

As with experiences of vulnerability, hosting communities' coping mechanisms and support structures vary significantly by region. **In Akkar, Bekaa and Tripoli + T5 where central government structures are less prevalent and the outbreak of violence is more common, people have relied on aid organisations and political parties for support in meeting basic needs. In the South, municipalities and political organisations have had the ability to respond more effectively to peoples' basic concerns and needs, and potential for conflict**. However, as the caseload of displaced people continues to increase in the South, it can be expected that these pre-existing support mechanisms are put under increasing strain, resulting in a reduced capacity to cope with population increases.

The conflict in Syria and consequent influx of refugees into Lebanon has additionally affected host community attitudes towards refugees and Syrians in general. A FAFO poll carried out with 900 Lebanese between May and June 2013 shows that **53 per cent of the respondents believe Lebanon should not receive any more refugees and patrol its borders more closely**. Likewise, 98 per cent think the border with Syria should be more policed, while 31 per cent think it should be closed.

Moreover, the willingness to host refugee communities has changed since the Syria crisis began. **At the start of the conflict, Lebanese communities were receptive to hosting Syrian refugees but this hospitality has since waned with the increased strain on the economy and the rising number of security incidents across the country**. Tensions between host communities and refugees stem mostly from structural problems that predate the refugee crisis but have since been exacerbated by a contracting economy, surge in labour supply and higher demands on basic services, food and shelter.

The **GoL's recent policies towards refugees seem to mirror the opinions of most Lebanese**. In late May 2014, the Minister of Interior announced that refugees returning to Syria after 1 June 2014 would be stripped of their refugee status in Lebanon. On 4 June 2014, the Minister of Social Affairs suggested that those fleeing from areas in Syria considered safe (i.e. under government control) would not be allowed to enter Lebanon.

Past assessments suggest that there are correlations in positive attitudes towards Syrian refugees and higher levels of trust in local government. On a similar note, **lower levels of social cohesion are reported in communities with low levels of trust in government institutions and inadequate public services**.

At present, municipalities are almost entirely dependent on the central government for funding and service delivery. Common problems, such as insufficient funds and delayed payments have impeded the capacity of local government to deliver adequate services to hosting communities and refugees alike.

Furthermore, in certain areas, central government presence and reach are limited. This reduces the capacity of the GoL and its international and local partners to reach populations in need. In many of these areas, particularly in Bekaa and South, **non-state actors are providing targeted assistance directly or through municipalities to Syrians and Lebanese communities in order to expand their political support and prevent the escalation of sectarian tensions**. These non-state aid providers often target specific populations depending on sectarian alignment or age groups. International aid providers have expressed concern over this trend, particularly as it may lead to the spread of extremist views and further polarisation in communities based on sectarian grounds.

In Lebanon, local community tensions predate the Syria crisis. **The influx of refugees and the convergence of Lebanese and Syrian political issues, however, risk exacerbating national, ethnic, political and sectarian tensions in local communities**. Cross-border armed clashes and shelling due to the presence of Syrian rebels in border areas, attacks on checkpoints and an increase in conflict between Lebanese communities are feeding fears of a spill over of the Syrian conflict in Lebanon. Over 70 per cent of Lebanese from the FAFO poll believe ethnic or religious conflict will erupt, and 67 per cent fear it might evolve into a new civil war.

The impact of the Syrian conflict on hosting and refugee communities in Lebanon remains primarily economic. Increased job competition, the higher cost of living and overstretched public services are contributing to low levels of community resilience and resentment towards displaced groups. In addition, **perceptions of unfair and uneven distribution of aid further exacerbate negative attitudes towards refugees from Syria**. The large influx of refugees has been linked to lower levels of social cohesion and risks offsetting already delicate pre-existing tensions.

This secondary data review has additionally found that notions of vulnerability in the context of the Syria crisis have traditionally been associated with poverty. In fact, the most commonly used humanitarian planning tool which assesses community vulnerabilities takes into account the distribution of UNHCR registered refugees and the number of Lebanese living on less than US\$4 per day. However, the findings in this report suggest that **community vulnerabilities are not just reflected in the level of income but also in its lack of resilience or capacity to adapt to changes**. Communities that are able to adapt to new or exacerbated problems and that can rely on either the local government or other organisations for support are better able to address vectors of tension and channel disputes, regardless of their level of income. At the same time, many communities that have not been severely affected by the influx of refugees have responded with more vehemence to the newcomers than any other, prompted by sectarian and security (rather than economic) concerns. This report therefore recommends that the vulnerability of host communities should not be assessed by just considering their material deprivation but the institutional networks that allow people to come together, assess cross-cutting issues and secure the resources needed to address community problems.

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Cover photo: School in Akkar Governorate, Lebanon May 2014 - photo by Paul Neuman/REACH

Acronyms and Abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GoL	Government of Lebanon
KI	Key informant
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoEP	Ministry of Energy and Power
MoIM	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Programme
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRS	Palestine Refugees from Syria
RRP6	2014 Syria Regional Response Plan
SI	Solidarités International
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Geographical Classifications

UNHCR Sub-Office	Refers to UNHCR regional operational areas in Lebanon. There are five UNHCR sub or field office regions in Lebanon: Akkar, Bekaa, Beirut and Mount Lebanon, Tripoli + T5 and South.
Governorate/ Mohafazat	Largest administrative division below the national level. Lebanon has eight governorates: Bekaa, Baalbek / Hermel, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North, Akkar, El Nabatieh, and South.
District/Caza	Second largest administrative division below the national level. Each governorate is divided into districts or cazas. Lebanon has 25 districts.
Cadastral	Geographic classification which are below the level of district/caza. Cadastral is not an administrative division and is used solely by humanitarian practitioners in Lebanon. Cadastrals may encompass one or more contiguous villages/neighbourhoods.
Municipality	Smallest administrative division in Lebanon. Municipalities serve villages and urban areas. There are 985 municipalities in Lebanon.

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INTRODUCTION

As the conflict in Syria continues into its fourth year 1,055,393 registered refugees from Syria have sought refuge in Lebanon.³ The demographic, social and economic impact of the refugee influx is being felt acutely by Lebanese host communities. Syrian refugees are reportedly living in more than 1,400 localities across Lebanon.⁴ According to the 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6), 86 per cent of refugees live in communities where 66 per cent of vulnerable Lebanese also reside.⁵ Of the 1.2 million affected Lebanese, 600,000 residents in 145 municipalities have been identified as ‘particularly vulnerable’.⁶ The presence of refugees has affected the resilience of host communities across the country by contributing to local demographic and economic pressures. New and old tensions are (re)emerging in host communities, eroding the religious, political and socioeconomic pillars of stability and threatening social cohesion.

This report reviews existing data and available information on the social, economic and political impact of the refugee influx on Lebanese host communities with a particular focus on the principal vectors of social tension. Additionally, results of a rapid stakeholder analysis conducted in June 2014 triangulate the information in the data review, and help to more fully gauge the actions of the numerous humanitarian organisations in Lebanon. The secondary data review, combined with the rapid stakeholder analysis, aimed to inform the design of the primary data collection tools and contribute to the final analytical report for an assessment conducted by the REACH Initiative in partnership with the United Nations Organisation for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Through this assessment, REACH and OCHA hope to inform targeted host community programming in Lebanon through the participatory identification of vulnerabilities and factors that undermine resilience and social cohesion at the community level.

This report is divided into six sections. The first section elaborates on the humanitarian response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, as well as the 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6), which seeks to consider the needs of host communities by taking a resilience-based approach to mitigate risks of tension between host and refugee populations. The methodology of the secondary data review and the REACH/OCHA assessment of host community vulnerabilities are then considered, followed by a review of the pre-crisis economic situation in Lebanon, a short analysis of the Government of Lebanon’s (GoL’s) structural limitations at the local level and a short history of Syria’s presence in Lebanon from 1976 to 2005.

The subsequent section summarises the impact of the influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon at both the national and governorate levels and elaborates on how the country’s human development indicators have changed since the onset of the Syrian conflict. Information gleaned from the stakeholder analysis is also included for each UNHCR sub-office location, and further delineates the extent of humanitarian action both for refugees and host communities. Finally, primary vectors of tension affecting social cohesion are analysed both at the national and governorate levels with a particular emphasis on triggers of conflict between Lebanese host communities and refugees.

³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>. Accessed on 19 June 2014.

⁴ United Nations Development Programme and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Lebanon: RRP6 Monthly Update – February (2014).

⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (2013)

⁶ United Nations Development Programme and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Lebanon: RRP6 Monthly Update – February (2014).

METHODOLOGY

This report draws on studies conducted by UN agencies, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and national and international think tanks; articles published by Lebanese and international media outlets; and interviews carried out with national and international NGO practitioners in Lebanon.

One of the main goals of this review was to identify information gaps in secondary data on the provision of services to host communities in the five United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) sub-office areas, specifically Akkar, Bekaa, Beirut and Mount Lebanon, Tripoli + T5 and South. A rapid stakeholder analysis was also conducted through interviews with key national / international actors in country and through consulting the ActivityInfo database⁷.

Defining Vulnerability in the Context of Host Communities

Humanitarian and development practitioners recognise the need to address vulnerabilities of both displaced and host communities.⁸ However, there is no consensus on how community level vulnerability is defined in the context of the Syria crisis. The most prevalent planning tool used by the humanitarian and development actors in regards to community vulnerability in Lebanon is the ranking index created by UNICEF based on 2004 GoL and 2014 UNHCR data. Initially released in late 2013, this vulnerability index is a composite of the Poor Lebanese⁹ and Registered Refugee¹⁰ Indices. Cadastrals were ranked based on their composite vulnerability scores and divided into five categories based on their level of vulnerability.¹¹ The highest ranking quintile was classified as the ‘most vulnerable’. Humanitarian and development practitioners currently use the results of the UNICEF vulnerability ranking index to determine target populations for various types of interventions.

However, there are several limitations to this conceptualisation of vulnerability as well as the results of the vulnerability ranking index. First, the data used for the Poverty Lebanese Index is outdated as this data was collected by the GoL in 2004. In addition, the ranking is limited in scope as it only takes into account household poverty and the distribution of registered refugees by cadastral. Other issues such as access to services, municipal infrastructure and security incidents which are relevant to measuring vulnerability are not currently included in this ranking index due to limited availability of data.

For the purposes of this report, we are adopting a broader definition of vulnerabilities which goes beyond indicators related to household poverty and the geographic distribution of registered Syrian refugees. Specifically, vulnerability refers to ‘the capacity of communities to withstand and recover from shocks and stressors’.¹² In line with the strategies outlined in the RRP6 to prevent the escalation of vulnerabilities, particular focus will be placed on factors affecting community resilience and social cohesion.¹³ In this report, these factors include the impacts of the refugee crisis on demographic profiles of communities, access to basic services and public infrastructure, and the propensity or risk of (escalating) dispute.

⁷ ActivityInfo is an online humanitarian project monitoring tool, which helps humanitarian organizations to collect, manage, map and analyze indicators. ActivityInfo was deployed to Lebanon by UNHCR on behalf of the interagency coordination to simplify reporting and allow for real time monitoring.

⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (2013)

⁹ The Poor Lebanese Index is calculated by dividing the number of people living under US\$4 a day (based on 2004 GoL data) in a given cadastral by the number of poor people in the poorest cadastral.

¹⁰ The Registered Refugee Index is calculated by dividing the number of registered refugees in a given cadastral by the number of refugees in the cadastral with the highest amount of registered newcomers.

¹¹ United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, Republic of Lebanon – Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Meeting Vulnerable Municipalities (2013).

¹² UNDP and UNDG Working Group on Resilience – MENA, *Position Paper: A Resilience-Based Development Response to the Syria Crisis*, December 2013.

¹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (2013)

Information gaps

There are gaps in the availability of secondary data regarding the provision of services to host communities in three sub-office regions: Tripoli + T5, Mount Lebanon and Beirut, and the South. No information was found regarding education services in the South, and there is very limited data available about health care and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in the South sub-office region. The information on shelter and protection in Tripoli + T5 is sparse and refers almost solely to the city of Tripoli. There is also little information on education and health services for Lebanese in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

Response of UN agencies and National and International Partner Organizations

The review of Who is Where, doing What, When is based mainly on the information provided by partner organizations that reported to UNCHR the activities they implemented between January and June 2014. This information is collected by UNHCR, on behalf of the interagency coordination, in both ActivityInfo and convention 3W/4W spreadsheets.

The limitations of the review rely, first, on the fact that several partner organizations working in Lebanon during January and June 2014 had not reported their activities to UNHCR. Second, there are NGOs and charities working in Lebanon that are not partnered with UNHCR and therefore do not participate in any of UNHCR's coordination and information management efforts. To compensate for this information gap, further details about the response to the crisis in Lebanon – and in particular to the assistance of affected Lebanese host communities – was gathered by reviewing minutes of meetings, assessments, reports, and information gathered through interviews with NGO representatives and development practitioners.

At the time of writing no specific information was provided in the Activity Info about the Social Cohesion and Livelihoods sector, nor about Shelter, Protection or Sexual and Gender Based Violence. However, data about those sectors found in alternative sources, particularly minutes of working group meetings, was included where possible.

1. BEFORE THE SYRIA CRISIS: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN LEBANON

After the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 and the war with Israel in 2006, Lebanon experienced half a decade of economic growth at an average rate of 7.1 per cent per annum.¹⁴ During this period of economic growth, however, low-productivity sector jobs were created, mainly in trade and construction, and there was a decline in labour demand in higher-productivity sectors such as transportation, telecommunications, and insurance services. This trend led to an increase in informal employment, in particular of low-skilled self-employed workers, and limited the effects of economic growth from reaching the most vulnerable.¹⁵ At the same time, the boom in the real estate sector drove housing prices up, making shelter options expensive for the low and middle-income population.

For decades, the inefficiency of the infrastructure sector curbed development sustainability and placed considerable stress on government revenues. Lebanon's electricity sector was highly inefficient even before the conflict due to insufficient capacity, high production costs, low consumer confidence and low investment levels.¹⁶ Electricity supply, for example, responded to barely 60 per cent of demand.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

In addition, the quality and regularity of public service provision and infrastructure management were inadequate even before the Syria crisis. Although 79 per cent of the population had access to potable water before the Syria conflict, shortages were common for most of the day and in many areas private water providers emerged to compensate for shortages. Furthermore, before the crisis, the wastewater network covered 60 per cent of Lebanon but only 8 per cent of the disposed water was treated.¹⁷ The provision of solid waste management services was insufficient before the crisis as well. In 2006, municipalities were assigned the responsibility of street cleaning and waste collection according to the Sewage and Waste Management master plan put forward by the Ministry of Energy and Water. In addition, municipalities were put in charge of the treatment and disposal of ad hoc landfills and dumps, while the primary ones were under the responsibility of Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction. However, lack of funding, institutional incapacity and lack of consensus about the location of dumps curbed the implementation of the programme. Towns without a municipal council usually had a waste collection and disposal system financed by their inhabitants. There are three sanitary landfills in Naameh, Zahle and Bsalim, while the rest are in the open, along roads and on riverbeds.¹⁸

Health indicators, however, improved in the first decade of the twenty first century and reached regional averages.¹⁹ This was in spite of the reduction of public spending on health, which left out-of-pocket spending by households and employers as the single largest source of financing of health care services in the country.²⁰ At the same time, Lebanon attained 90 per cent primary education enrolment, with gender parity achieved in most regions. Still, considerable differences in quality between public and private schools, and between schools in Beirut and Mount Lebanon and in the rest of the country, perpetuate social inequalities.²¹

1.1 Local Governance

Municipalities represent the only form of administrative decentralisation in the country. Decision-making is the responsibility of the Municipal Council, which elects the Mayor in the presence of the Governor (*Muhafez*) and the District Administrator. The *Mukhtar*, who acts as mediator and representative of state administration in the village, is elected through a public election every six years. *Mukhtars* and municipality officials usually oversee dispute settlements although in some cases, municipalities are the source of the conflict themselves. *Sheikhs* and elders play a significant role in some villages as well, but formal practices have for the most part subsumed customary ones.²²

There are 985 municipalities in Lebanon, 70 per cent of them with less than 4,000 inhabitants. Around 800 municipalities are fiscally and administratively weak and do not have the capacity to deliver the services they are mandated to by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM). Municipalities receive funding from the MoIM in the form of Independent Municipal Funds (IMFs). However, these funds are usually delayed and divided into several payments, making it difficult for municipalities to plan and implement long-term programmes. In some cases, municipalities struggle to pay their employees and cover administrative costs. Additional funding is difficult to obtain, given that revenue from taxes is insufficient within most municipalities because of the absence of large investments and low collection rates.²³ Around 400 municipalities do not even have one employee.²⁴

¹⁷ Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment Sector Chapters, WASH, April 2014

¹⁸ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² REACH

²³ Mercy Corps, Municipal Guide: Successful Municipal Strategies to Respond to the Syria Refugee Crisis (2014).

²⁴ Sami Atallah, Decentralization in Lebanon, The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 2012

In order to reduce dependency on the central government, two-thirds of municipalities have formed into 51 different municipal unions. By joining a municipal union, municipalities can pool resources and participate in a collective decision making process.²⁵ Municipalities can also receive additional financing, often obtained from individual donors or from the municipal union for the implementation of common projects.²⁶ To avoid political deadlock, most unions are comprised of municipalities with similar political alignments. As a result, the municipalities in a given union sometimes have inconsistent geographical, social and economic attributes. These differences frustrate the implementation of common projects. Additionally, due to conflicting political allegiances, some municipalities do not join unions. This gives them more independence but makes them less capable of obtaining additional sources of funding.²⁷

Since the refugee influx, 71 per cent of municipalities assessed by Mercy Corps say conditions within their jurisdictions have worsened.²⁸ Municipalities received an unofficial mandate from Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) to register refugees and increase security measures. However, the budget was not increased to cope with these additional responsibilities, which, coupled with the weak administrative capacity of the municipal governments, hampered efforts made to follow the Ministry's directives.²⁹ According to the municipalities assessed by Mercy Corps, they have all registered the incoming refugees in their area.³⁰ However, according to an assessment conducted by Oxfam, municipalities started registering refugees late and had not kept track of the number of newcomers settled within their boundaries.³¹ These municipalities identified their priority needs as capacity building, more qualified staff, and greater and more diverse sources of funding. In addition, better equipment and facilities, management and planning, and targeted community engagement and outreach strategies would facilitate their capacity to efficiently deliver services.

1.2 Syria's Presence in Lebanon (1976-2005)

Syrian troops entered the country in 1976 during the Lebanese Civil War. The Taif Accord, signed in 1989, legitimized Syria's presence in the country by not calling for its withdrawal, allowing the Syrian regime to *de facto* dominate the political system in Lebanon. From 1990 to 2005, Syria controlled Lebanon's political affairs and had extensive influence over its economy. During that period, tens of thousands of Syrian workers moved to Lebanon. Some of the Syrian workers thrived during this period of economic growth but many Lebanese viewed them with suspicion and associated them with the Syrian regime. Throughout its presence in Lebanon, Syria was viewed as responsible for the assassinations of many national leaders and deeply involved in corrupt practices in the Lebanese government.

Attitudes of Lebanese residents towards the Syrian military presence, however, have varied depending on political affiliation and time period. The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 led to the emergence of a popular movement calling for the withdrawal of Syrian troops. The movement, backed by Christian, Druze and Sunni political parties, ultimately succeeded in forcing the withdrawal of the Syrian troops. However, other groups—most prominently the Shia parties, Hezbollah and Amal—opposed the withdrawal as they benefitted from Syrian patronage. Since 2005, the main political divide in Lebanon has centred on parties' attitudes towards Syria, with the current March 14 coalition opposed to the Assad regime and the March 8 coalition supportive.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Sami Atallah, *Decentralization in Lebanon*, The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 2012

²⁷ Mercy Corps, *Municipal Guide: Successful Municipal Strategies to Respond to the Syria Refugee Crisis* (2014).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, *Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon* (2013).

³⁰ Mercy Corps, *Municipal Guide: Successful Municipal Strategies to Respond to the Syria Refugee Crisis* (2014).

³¹ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, *Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon* (2013).

2. THE IMPACT OF THE SYRIA REFUGEE CRISIS: ECONOMIC AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Prior to the on-set of the Syria crisis in 2011, Lebanon experienced a period of relatively high economic growth; from 2006 to 2011, Lebanon experienced economic growth at an average rate of 7.1 per cent. While this high rate of growth can be partially attributed to a low base in 2006, the sustained regional demand for Lebanon's services, particularly capital flows, has significantly contributed to this growth. The reduction in debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) was mainly the result of sustained GDP growth and only slightly due to increased fiscal surpluses. In fact, reforms to increase revenue collection and decrease expenditure – particularly in the electricity and civil service sectors – were never fully implemented, and the underlying structural fiscal imbalances present before 2006 still remain.³²

2.1 National Macroeconomic Trends

The ongoing Syrian conflict has affected key sectors in Lebanon, such as tourism and real estate, leading to a reduction in economic activity. This decline can largely be attributed to the insecurity and uncertainty that negatively affects investor and consumer confidence; consumer confidence dropped by 36.8 per cent in 2012 compared to the previous year. Private sector investment – particularly in the construction, real estate, and energy sectors – has decreased considerably given the drop in aggregate demand, increased investment risks and the halting of expected business reforms due to the current political stalemate.³³ It is estimated that this has resulted in a loss of approximately US\$1.5 billion in government revenue collection from 2012-2014.

Despite this economic downturn, Lebanon's increased population size resulting from the continuing refugee influx has led to rising pressures on public services, resulting in a widening gap between government revenue and public expenditure. Reduced economic activity and growing public debt have curbed Lebanon's capacity to reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio;³⁴ the pre-crisis forecast for Lebanon's economic growth in 2013 was 4.4 per cent rather than the current projections of 1.5 per cent.³⁵

2.1.1 TRADE

Trade has been greatly affected by the Syria crisis as a sizeable share of Lebanese goods historically transited through Syria. Between 2000 and 2010, exports grew at an average of 22 per cent. By 2012, however, exports decelerated and in 2013, trading contracted severely as tariff barriers increased an average of half a percentage point due to the increased difficulty of transporting goods by land across Syria. In addition, the import barriers to industrial supplies are increasing production costs and making manufacturing exports less competitive in foreign markets, where their demand in Syria, their main destination, has already declined.

While Lebanon used to be a net food importer from Syria, food exports experienced a surplus in 2012. The impact of the crisis on Syrian agricultural land might result in a further increase of Lebanese agriculture products. Still, trade disruptions have inflated prices, particularly of staple foodstuffs such as wheat flour. Given that most Lebanese exports are directed only to the region, exports will probably decrease more than imports. This suggests that the trade imbalance is likely to increase and the fiscal deficit will widen further.³⁶

³² World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Syrian Crisis Pushing Lebanese Into Poverty," *IRIN*, 31 October 2013.

³⁶ Ibid.

2.1.2 KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS

Since the start of the Syria crisis, there has been a notable decline in key economic sectors including real estate, agriculture, tourism and financial services. The real estate sector grew rapidly in Lebanon from 2006 to 2009 before slowing in 2010. The sector was expected to remain steady in terms of growth due to wage standardisation. However, there has been a shift in demand from luxury housing to budget options. Though rental prices have soared since the Syria crisis, the lack of consumer confidence has resulted in lower levels of investment into the construction and real estate sectors and sales have decreased significantly.³⁷ An exception can be found in the Bekaa, where Syrians are investing in the construction of hotels and restaurants to respond to higher demand due to rapid population growth.³⁸

Agriculture profits have also fallen. Residents are unable to access arable land as a result of security incidents, higher transportation and agricultural input costs, water scarcity and limited cross-border business opportunities.³⁹ The introduction of double shifts to accommodate the rise in labour supply has additionally reduced wages. Although, there has been a rise in demand of agricultural goods, the inelasticity of supply has led to price inflation, reducing individuals' purchasing power and creating an income gap.⁴⁰ Given that both the construction and agriculture sectors employ mostly low-skilled workers, the economic slowdown has particularly affected already vulnerable sections of the Lebanese population.

In addition, losses in the tourism sector, the leading service-related exports sector in Lebanon, due to insecurity in neighbouring Syria and in border areas amount to 0.5 per cent of GDP. While tourism losses were made up through consumption by refugees from Syria, their preference for low-cost services cannot match the consumption levels expected in the luxury tourism market.⁴¹ The lift of the Gulf Cooperation Council travel ban to Lebanon, imposed in 2013, may encourage tourism from Gulf countries during the 2014 summer season.⁴²

Finally, the financial services sector including banking has also experienced the consequences of reduced economic activity in the country. While the luxury services market suffers from lower demand, particularly due to the fall in tourism, the fuelling of money to the economy and the hike in demand for food and non-food items has compensated for the loss. However, Lebanese banks, particularly those with subsidiary branches in Syria, have seen a considerable decline in asset holdings.

2.1.3 INFLATION

Existing data on price inflation at the national level does not reflect changes in domestic pricing. Localised reports, however, indicate a trend in price inflation, specifically for food items in border towns. In these areas, the local population is no longer able to access cheaper products in Syria; this significantly reduces the purchasing power of poorer households.⁴³ There have also been reports of price inflation in the housing market since the start of the unrest in Syria. The onset of the Syria crisis and the subsequent influx of refugees have increased the demand for rental accommodation, pushing up already high prices.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Construction Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Constructing Market-Based Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

³⁹ Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment Sector Chapters, Livelihoods, April 2014

⁴⁰ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Agricultural Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Recommendations for Growing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

⁴¹ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Lebanon Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA): Executive Briefing for Analyses in the Construction, Service Sector and Agricultural Labor Systems (2013).

⁴² World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁴³ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Agricultural Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Recommendations for Growing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

2.2 Human Development Indicators

According to the 2008 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) poverty assessment⁴⁴, nearly 1 million Lebanese (27 per cent) were estimated to be poor before the onset of the Syria crisis. Poverty has traditionally been more acute in the North (52.5 per cent) and the South (42 per cent) governorates, followed by Bekaa (29 per cent). High poverty rates are also most prevalent amongst the unemployed and those engaged in the agricultural and construction sectors.⁴⁵ Due to the economic impact of the Syrian refugee influx, between 170,000 and 200,000 additional Lebanese are expected to fall below the poverty line by the end of 2014 while already poor families are thought to experience greater vulnerabilities.⁴⁶

The degree to which host communities are affected by the Syria crisis differs by region. According to a study conducted by UNDP and the Consultation and Research Institute, Bekaa and North governorates host the largest number of Lebanese poor and have received the highest number of Syrian refugees. The impact of the influx of refugees has been less severe in the Chouf, Tyre, and the suburbs of Beirut. Still, rising rates of vulnerability among Lebanese host communities throughout the country is reflected in the sharp increase of applications to the National Poverty Targeting Programme of the Ministry of Social Affairs between December 2013 and March 2014 in Mount Lebanon, North and Bekaa.⁴⁷

The influx of Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) into the country is posing problems for the stability of Palestine refugee camps across the country. Almost half of the PRS are being hosted by families in camps, which already suffer from overcrowding.⁴⁸ PRS are mostly concentrated in refugee camps in Sidon, Tyre, and Tripoli where living conditions are poor. In addition, the decree issued by the MoSA allowing Syrian refugee children to attend schools and access health services is not applicable to Palestinians since the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is mandated to support this group. However, UNRWA's currently suffers from inadequate funding and therefore cannot provide sufficient assistance to newcomers.⁴⁹ PRS lack the capacity to engage in less negative coping mechanisms since, like Palestinian refugees before them, they are banned from working in the public sector and many professional fields, and suffer discrimination from employers. Currently, the estimated unemployment rate among PRS is 90 per cent.⁵⁰

2.2.1 LIVELIHOODS

Before the Syrian conflict began, high long-term unemployment and poor matchup of labour supply and demand were prevalent. A large number of jobs were related to low-quality, low-productivity sectors such as trade and construction. In addition, there was a decline in labour demand for higher-productivity sectors such as transportation, telecommunications and insurance services. These market conditions led to an increase in informal employment, in particular of low-skilled, self-employed workers. Today, it is estimated that 51 per cent of jobs are in the service sector and 20 per cent in trade while the rest are engaged in the construction and agricultural sectors.⁵¹

Before the crisis, Syrian workers, employed mainly in agriculture and construction, represented 17 per cent of the labour force in Lebanon. In 2014, Syrians reportedly represent 27 to 35 per cent of the workforce.

⁴⁴ United Nations Development Programme (2008). Poverty, Growth and Income Distribution in Lebanon.

⁴⁵ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁴⁶ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Martin Armstrong, "Lebanon Tells Palestinian Syrians It Is Safe to Go Back", Christian Science Monitor, 23 May 2014.

⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

The influx of refugees is expected to increase the labour supply by 30 to 50 per cent, particularly of unskilled workers, women and youth. Because of the increase job competition, an additional 220,000 to 324,000 Lebanese, mostly unskilled youth, may lose their jobs, doubling the national unemployment rate from 10 per cent to over 20 per cent.⁵² High unemployment is expected to affect mostly low-income households.⁵³ Given that Syrians in Lebanon have traditionally worked for lower wages⁵⁴, Lebanese workers are facing serious competition for jobs, particularly in the informal market, and are faced with decreasing wages. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, there has been up to a 60 per cent reduction in daily wages for unskilled labourers,⁵⁵ while the Emerging Market Monitoring Assessment reports that Lebanese wages have fallen by 29 per cent since 2012.⁵⁶ Though some local businesses are benefiting from the availability of cheap labour, many of the poorest households are facing shrinking incomes.⁵⁷

Agriculture and construction workers are facing the greatest competition from unskilled Syrian refugee workers. Wages have fallen and work shifts have been reduced. However, the limited availability of land and the lack of value-developing infrastructure for agricultural produce curb the capacity of the agriculture market to absorb the increased supply of labour.⁵⁸ In addition, insecurity deters investment in the constructions sector and the demand for temporary shelter by refugees does not compensate for the long-term risk of investing in the construction of housing for rent. To adapt to declining wages, Lebanese households are relying heavily on diminishing savings and reducing expenditures. In some cases, households have been forced to sell material and liquid assets. Even if Syrian refugee workers engaged in entrepreneurial activities and create jobs, the impact would not be enough to compensate for the overall loss in wages.⁵⁹

2.2.3 HEALTH

Before the crisis, health indicators had been improving and matched regional averages, with life expectancy at 75 years for women and 71 years for men and an infant mortality rate of 9 over 1000 births. These improvements took place despite cuts in public health care spending as the GoL reduced expenditures by 45 per cent between 2005 and 2011. However, since the onset of the Syria crisis, there has been a rise in contagious diseases (measles), the outbreak of new diseases previously absent in the country (Ierishmaniasis), and an increased risk of epidemics (measles, tuberculosis). The risk of epidemics is rising given the lack of water and sanitation infrastructure and poor environmental conditions.⁶⁰ In addition, the health care system is severely strained because of pending financial commitments from the Ministry of Public Health. Contracted hospitals are unable to respond to increased demand for health services as a result of inadequate cash flow and staff shortages. Hospitals are particularly overstrained in Bekaa, Beirut and North governorates. In Hermel, the number of registered cases has doubled.⁶¹ In December 2012, Syrian refugees represented 40 per cent of primary health care patients. This has resulted in a rise in the health service costs, shortages in the supply of medicines and a reduction in the capacity of health care centres to attend to the needs of the Lebanese population. Complaints from local Lebanese populations, sparked by the increasingly restricted access to an already inadequate health care system, are commonplace and many Lebanese are opting for private hospital care instead.

⁵² World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security Impact Assessment and Response Plan for the Syria Crisis in the Neighbouring Countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey (2013).

⁵⁶ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Agricultural Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Recommendations for Growing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

⁵⁷ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

⁵⁸ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Agricultural Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Recommendations for Growing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

⁵⁹ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

The Ministry of Public Health provides free primary health care to Lebanese nationals but most expenses for ambulatory outpatient care as well as secondary and tertiary care are borne out of pocket. The public sector only finances 30 per cent of health care spending, including through health care schemes for public servants and safety nets for the uninsured through public hospitals, contracted private hospitals and primary health care centres affiliated with NGOs, municipalities or MoSA. Limited public assistance for health services leaves a great portion of the low-income population at risk.

The Ministry of Public Health does not provide free-of-charge primary health care to refugees but covers emergency cases in contracted hospitals. However, the Ministry of Public Health has delayed payments to contracted hospitals and public ones are considerably understaffed, making them unable to deal with the increasing demand on health services due to the refugee influx. This situation is particularly acute in Bekaa and North, where the influx of refugees has been the greatest and both public and private health care facilities were strained due to inadequate financing, staffing and supplies.

2.2.4 EDUCATION

Pre-Syria crisis education indicators suggest that Lebanon had attained over 90 per cent primary education enrolment with gender parity having been achieved for the past ten years. Over 30 per cent of students, primarily those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, were enrolled in public schools, which represent 47 per cent of all schools in Lebanon. However, there have always been regional disparities with an average enrolment rate of 76 per cent in Akkar and Minieh-Dennieh (compared to the 90 per cent national average) and a substantial gender gap coupled with understaffing and poor infrastructure in the North and the Bekaa. In addition, the quality of education in public schools is considerably lower than in private institutions. Given that the latter are mostly located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, disparities in the quality of education are largely based on regional and socio-economic divisions.⁶²

The influx of Syrian refugee children has raised demand for education services, increasing government expenditures and affecting the quality of public education. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) provided open access to refugees in public schools in late 2011 that resulted in the enrolment of 40,000 new students. This number is expected to quadruple in 2014 and represent over 50 per cent of public school students. In October 2013, it was estimated that an additional 90,000 students could be accommodated by the public school system. However, 20,000 Lebanese students may be forced to switch to public schools given their families' deteriorating socio-economic conditions, leaving room for only 70,000 additional students.⁶³

Given the patterns of displacement, most refugee students have registered in Tripoli + T5, Akkar and Bekaa, areas already suffering from inadequate educational infrastructure and poor quality of schooling. Due to increasing demand, many schools have introduced a second shift in the afternoon and are considering building pre-fabricated classrooms. In other locations, authorities have given priority to the enrolment of Lebanese students and allowed Syrian students only when extra seats are available.⁶⁴ However, some schools which were due to close because of low enrolment rates are now remaining open to accommodate Syrian refugee children.⁶⁵

The inclusion of students from Syria into the Lebanese education system has impacted the quality of scholastic services. Some schools are overcrowded and incidents of discrimination against Syrian students have disrupted education service delivery.

⁶² World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

⁶⁵ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

In addition, Syrian children are struggling to learn French or English given that the curricula in Syria are only in Arabic.⁶⁶ While many teachers are trying to use Arabic as the primary language of instruction to avoid drop-outs, this affects the quality of learning of the Lebanese students, whose reading and writing skills in Arabic are often limited. Furthermore, many Syrian students are traumatised and in need of psychosocial support. This is affecting social cohesion among students in class and requires additional training and capacity building for teachers.⁶⁷

2.2.5 SHELTER

Rental prices have soared due to the increase in demand for temporary housing by refugees. According to a Mercy Corps study, the national average stood at US\$200 per month in October 2012 but had doubled or tripled in some areas by early 2013.⁶⁸ There has been a sharp rise in rental prices in the North and the Bekaa, where limited supply is coupled with rapidly increasing demand. Refugees who cannot find housing with relatives or friends or cannot afford to pay rent are opting for improvised shelters in rundown buildings, public housing or informal settlements. The hike in rental prices is also forcing Lebanese families leave their current homes in search of more affordable housing options.⁶⁹

2.2.6 WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

Public water supply was insufficient in Lebanon even before the influx of Syrian refugees. Almost 80 per cent of the population had access to potable water but supply was limited on average to 7.5 hours in the summer and 13 hours in the winter. This has forced many Lebanese households to rely on private water suppliers to meet consumption needs.⁷⁰ The increase in demand for water due to the influx of refugees has reduced water supply by 7 per cent. In addition, refugees living in informal settlements are using water resources through illegal connections, redirecting water supply away from Lebanese households.⁷¹ Water scarcity is now particularly severe in Tripoli, Akkar⁷², Qaa and Hermel⁷³.

Despite supply shortages, poor water management contributes to inadequate access. Tariffs for water are annual and fixed at 1 m³ per day per household, which does not encourage proper water management.⁷⁴ Many areas are currently at risk of water depletion in the summer due to overuse of wells.⁷⁵ The aged and poorly maintained water supply network also contributes to resource depletion. This issue is often raised by municipal authorities, who complain about being responsible for its upkeep without the provision of sufficient financial resources.⁷⁶ Unregulated sewage discharge and runoff from agricultural fertilizers and industries are polluting groundwater and spreading the risk of water-borne diseases, such as dysentery, Hepatitis A and typhoid.⁷⁷ This is particularly problematic in Qaa and Zahle in Bekaa governorate.⁷⁸ Solid waste generation has doubled in certain areas and is also polluting water resources. The capacity of municipalities to provide solid waste management services is very limited given restrictions in funding. This issue is particularly severe in overcrowded urban areas, such as Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon and Tyre, as well as in the Bekaa towns of Qaa, Zahle and Hermel.⁷⁹

⁶⁶ World Vision, *Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon* (2013).

⁶⁷ World Bank and United Nations, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (2013).

⁶⁸ Mercy Corps, *Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon* (2013).

⁶⁹ World Bank and United Nations, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (2013).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, *The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning* (forthcoming).

⁷² Interview with Jean Murad, National Poverty Targeting Program, Beirut, May 2014.

⁷³ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, *The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning* (forthcoming).

⁷⁴ World Bank and United Nations, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (2013).

⁷⁵ Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment Sector Chapters, WASH, April 2014

⁷⁶ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, *Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon* (2013).

⁷⁷ World Bank and United Nations, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (2013).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, *The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning* (forthcoming).

2.2.7 ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Lebanon's electricity sector has always been highly inefficient due to limited installation capacity and low levels of investment.⁸⁰ Electricité du Liban only meets 63 per cent of electricity demand. An increase in the demand from houses, collective shelters and hotels as well as improvised connections to the electricity grid is further affecting power supply.⁸¹ The average supply of power is expected to drop by 10 per cent, from 18.3 hours to 16.5 hours a day nationwide.⁸² Since the supply of electricity for Syrian refugees is sometimes redirected from Lebanese households, the latter are facing lower supply levels and higher fees. As such, many are resorting to cutting down trees for fuel.⁸³

The unreliable electricity sector has hampered economic development and fiscal sustainability. Public subsidies for fuel already represent 4 per cent of GDP and are expected to increase by 20 per cent due to the increase in the number of users. Investments to support the Government's July 2010 Policy Paper,⁸⁴ which includes ten strategic initiatives to reform the electricity sector's infrastructure, supply and demand, and legal framework, are underway. However, these have not been preceded by the necessary reforms in production efficiency for the sector to improve.

2.2.8 ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

Infrastructure and transportation services have also been affected by the refugee influx. Road networks across the country generally lack maintenance. Given that there are no tolls or taxes for road usage, their construction and upkeep is funded through loans or transfers from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Public Works or the Ministry of Interior.⁸⁵ In addition, freight services from Lebanon have declined by 65 per cent due to insecurity, informal tolls and lack of insurance. Host communities have therefore experienced an increase in traffic, which has affected the already saturated transport network and contributed to the deterioration of roads.

2.2.9 SECURITY CONDITIONS

According to the former Minister of Interior and Municipalities Marwan Charbel, the crime rate in Lebanon has increased by 50 per cent since the onset of the refugee crisis.⁸⁶ Petty crime and sexual harassment have been the most common type of criminal incidents reported to the police or in focus group discussions.⁸⁷ Armed clashes, terrorist activity and cross-border gunfire have become increasingly common in border areas in Bekaa and North governorates, and Tripoli. In border areas, such as in Aarsal and the town of Wadi Khaled, cross-border shelling and gunfire have become commonplace. In Tripoli, clashes between Sunnis in Bab al-Tabbaneh and Alawites in Jabal Mohsen lasted for over a year before a security plan endorsed by the Lebanese Armed Forces put an end to this fighting in April 2014. Beirut has also experienced attacks from armed groups, clashes and a rise in petty crime.

⁸⁰ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

⁸⁴ Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Energy and Water, Policy Paper for the Electricity Sector (2010).

⁸⁵ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

⁸⁶ Carine Torbey, Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Fuel Tension, *BBC News*, 9 April 2014.

⁸⁷ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

3. THE IMPACT OF THE SYRIA REFUGEE CRISIS: REGIONAL VARIATIONS

According to the UNDP and Consultation and Research Institute report released in October 2013, the sectors most affected by the refugee influx are solid waste management, livelihoods and health.⁸⁸ The regional variability of the impact on these sectors is low. However, the impact on other heavily affected sectors such as electricity, water and sanitation varies highly by region. While the provision of power, water and sanitation services in Beirut has not changed much, it has drastically been reduced in North and Bekaa governorates. The greatest variability by sector can be found in the cost of production, which has declined considerably in Bekaa and North due to the influx of Syrians willing to work for lower wages. Levels of social cohesion are also highly variable and appear to depend on the proportion of refugees settled in the area as compared to the total local population.

The following sections disaggregate available information on the impact of the Syria crisis on host communities by UNHCR operational area and sector. Findings suggest that the greatest challenges posed by the influx of refugees can be seen in competition for employment and access to public services and resources, such as solid waste management, health, electricity and water. In addition, security incidents and protection issues are increasing the level of tension already spurred by demographic and economic pressures.

3.1 Beirut and Mount Lebanon

The population of Beirut is 403,000 and there are currently 25,000 registered Syrian refugees living in the city. However, the number of unregistered refugees is estimated to be much higher. The population in Mount Lebanon is 1,507,000 people, out of which one-sixth lives below the 2004 poverty line (living on less than US\$4 a day). By February 2014, there were 201,232 Syrian refugees registered in Mount Lebanon. Baabda and El Metn districts have received the greatest number of refugees in this UNHCR operational area (see Table 1).⁸⁹

Table 1 Beirut and Mount Lebanon Population Figures (Lebanese and Registered Syrian Refugees)

District / City	Original Population	Registered Syrian Refugees
Aley	160,000	41,000
Baabda	520,000	66,000
Beirut	403,000	25,000
Chouf	153,000	41,000
Jbeil	80,000	2,500
Kesrouan	160,000	8,000
El Metn	430,000	41,000
Total	1,910,000	226,000

In addition, 9,000 PRS are living in the four Palestinian refugee camps in the suburbs of Beirut, specifically Shatila, Burj El Barajneh, Mar Elias and Dbayeh.⁹⁰ These camps are also hosting other communities because of the low cost of living; shelter and sanitation conditions in the camps have become dire.

⁸⁸ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

⁸⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: Beirut and Mount Lebanon Governorate Profile (2014).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Only 109 Lebanese returnees have registered in the High Relief Committee in Beirut, while 1,000 Lebanese returnees, mostly from Homs and rural Damascus, have settled in different communities across Mount Lebanon.⁹¹ In Beirut, the primary concerns for returnees are shelter, access to health care and food security. However, according to an International Organisation for Migration (IOM) study, 85 per cent of Lebanese returnees have never received assistance from NGOs.

In Mount Lebanon and Beirut, the impact of the influx of refugees has not been as strong as in the rest of the country given the comparatively lower proportion of refugees to Lebanese and on average higher incomes of local residents. Due to the higher cost of living, many Syrian refugees settling in Beirut tend to come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds than most of their co-nationals. However, these areas have seen an increase in overcrowded conditions and rental prices, water supply shortages and number of security incidents as a result of the refugee influx.

3.1.1 EDUCATION

Access to and quality of education in Beirut and Mount Lebanon is comparatively better than in the rest of the country given the large number of private and public schools.⁹² However, only a small number of schools are allowing Syrian refugee children to enrol with tuition covered by aid organisations. The Global Communities assessment in Mount Lebanon suggests that child labour is the main alternative to school.⁹³

3.1.2 WATER SUPPLY

In Aley and the Chouf, water shortages are increasingly common due to lack of rainwater and higher demand.⁹⁴ According to an assessment conducted by CARE International, all the municipalities in Chouf rely on spring water from Barouk though water is distributed through a piped network and stored in roof tanks.⁹⁵ Households also rely on water from boreholes when the piped network fails to meet demand.

In addition, the piped network works only intermittently during the day as a result of power cuts and limited water supply. In the summer, when spring water is used to irrigate apple orchards, municipalities receive water for about six hours a day, three times a week.⁹⁶ Water trucking remains an option for additional water supply but is expensive and unsustainable.⁹⁷ Municipalities are not taking any measures to cope with the increasing demand given lack of funding.⁹⁸ The Bourj Hammoud municipality, for example, is cutting non-essential services to reduce costs and cope with demands for solid waste management and water provision.⁹⁹

3.1.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT

According to the Global Communities report, the private company Sukleen is responsible for solid waste management in Mount Lebanon. However, it does not operate in residential areas or in informal settlements, where the concentration of refugees and accumulation of waste is higher.¹⁰⁰ According to the World Bank Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict, another company, Averda, works all over Mount Lebanon (aside from Byblos) and transports waste to treatment plants in Qarantina and Aamrousseh.

⁹¹ International Organisation for Migration (Lebanon Mission) and Lebanese High Relief Commission, *The Situation & Needs of Lebanese Returnees From Syria* (2013).

⁹² World Bank and United Nations, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (2013).

⁹³ Global Communities, *Global Communities Rapids Needs Assessment: Lebanon – Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf and Aley Districts* (2014).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ CARE, International DPNA, ACA, *Integrated Rapid Assessment: Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf District* (2013)

⁹⁶ CARE, International DPNA, ACA, *Integrated Rapid Assessment: Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf District* (2013)

⁹⁷ Global Communities, *Global Communities Rapids Needs Assessment: Lebanon – Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf and Aley Districts* (2014).

⁹⁸ Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment Sector Chapters, WASH, April 2014

⁹⁹ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, *Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon* (2013).

¹⁰⁰ Global Communities, *Global Communities Rapids Needs Assessment: Lebanon – Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf and Aley Districts* (2014).

Municipalities working with these private service providers are responsible for collecting the waste alongside roads and nearby houses and transport it to the collection sites.¹⁰¹

For waste water management, municipalities in the Chouf, Aley, and Baabda rely on a public sewage system but in some areas, latrines are not connected to the municipal network. Here, sewage networks are connected pits. In Chouf, for example, only 65 per cent of houses are connected to the public sewage system. The cost of emptying a pit is relatively high (US\$80 per pit) so some municipalities have tankers, which reduce the cost by about 25 per cent.¹⁰²

3.1.4 LIVELIHOODS AND LIVING COSTS

A study led by Global Communities in Mount Lebanon has found that the refugee influx has resulted in higher living costs and increased job competition. In Chouf and Aley, for example, the average monthly household expenditure is US\$1,500, which is reportedly higher than the average income. To cope, families are relying on formal or informal loans to make ends meet.¹⁰³ The same study reported that competition for employment is common among both skilled and unskilled workers in Aley and Baabda. Syrian men seek jobs in construction, agriculture, trade and services, all jobs performed by Lebanese, while refugee women work alongside Lebanese women as teachers, seamstresses, nurses and secretaries.

3.1.5 SHELTER

The majority of refugees in Mount Lebanon live in urban areas. The decline in the number of refugees living with host families suggests that there has been a saturation of housing market and less willingness of the host community to accommodate the newcomers.¹⁰⁴ According to an assessment conducted by World Vision International, rental prices in Beirut have increased by up to 400 per cent,¹⁰⁵ while in the southern suburbs of the city, prices have risen from US\$300 to US\$500.¹⁰⁶ As a result, many Lebanese have been forced to move out in search of cheaper accommodation. The situation is dire in the Palestinian camps around Beirut, particularly in Burj el Brajneh, which hosts PRS as well as Syrian refugees seeking a lower cost of living.¹⁰⁷ Though there has been a decline in willingness to host refugees in most areas, in the municipality of Aley, officials expressed the opposite sentiment as refugees' presence provides Lebanese residents the opportunity to rent out their houses and supplement their incomes.¹⁰⁸

3.1.6 SECURITY

Reports of petty crime, groups of young, armed men and clashes between Lebanese and Syrian youth are on the rise.¹⁰⁹ There has been an increase in bombings and suicide attacks in the southern suburbs of Beirut and some organisations, such as Hezbollah and Amal, have imposed security restrictions and curfews on Syrians. Cases of sexual harassment and rape have increased in Aley, Chouf and Baabda, and are affecting both Syrian and Lebanese women.¹¹⁰ In some places, curfews have been imposed on "foreigners" (i.e. Syrians) as a pre-emptive measure against crime, such as in the small Christian town of Botchay.¹¹¹

¹⁰¹ CARE, International DPNA, ACA, Integrated Rapid Assessment: Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf District (2013)

¹⁰² CARE, International DPNA, ACA, Integrated Rapid Assessment: Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf District (2013)

¹⁰³ Global Communities, Global Communities Rapids Needs Assessment: Lebanon – Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf and Aley Districts (2014).

¹⁰⁴ Global Communities, Global Communities Rapids Needs Assessment: Lebanon – Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf and Aley Districts (2014).

¹⁰⁵ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁷ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁰⁸ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁰⁹ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

¹¹⁰ Global Communities, Global Communities Rapids Needs Assessment: Lebanon – Mount Lebanon Governorate, Chouf and Aley Districts (2014).

¹¹¹ Carine Torbey, Op.Cit.

3.1.7 INFORMATION GAPS

No secondary data sources were found regarding access to and quality of health services and electricity supply in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. In addition, little is mentioned about PRS and protection issues in these areas.

3.1.8 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Stakeholder analysis findings strongly demonstrate that the organisations reporting activities in Beirut & Mount Lebanon focus the majority of their interventions on registered Syrian refugees. Data from activity reporting for the NFI, WASH, education and public health sectors show that although Lebanese host communities were included in beneficiary selection, they nonetheless received substantially less aid than their Syrian neighbours.

Perhaps the most significant difference in aid delivery between Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities can be noted in the health sector. From the 260 thousand patients who received primary health care treatment between January and April 2014, UNCHR data shows that 2571 of these people were Lebanese. Similarly, 11 thousand people received secondary health care in the area, but Ajem was the only organisation to provide these services to Lebanese patients, of which the overall total was six.

At the time of accessing ActivityInfo, June 2014, there was no specific information available about the Shelter, Social Cohesion and Livelihood sectors, neither at sub-office or district level. However, data from sector 3Ws show that organisations are providing housing and incentives for Lebanese communities to host refugees. Similarly, a number of other actors are providing cash for shelter to host communities accommodating refugees, as well as rehabilitating and improving houses, apartments, shelters and informal settlements. Vocational skills support, income generation, and employment and market creation projects have been implemented by organisations active in the region, and additional projects focused on solid waste management, WASH infrastructure and support for rehabilitation of schools and projects have also been undertaken. Protection monitoring and empowerment activities have been included in the initiatives of a number of organisations, several of which have also addressed SGBV issues.

3.2 Tripoli + T5

Tripoli + T5 is composed of the districts of Tripoli, El Batroun, El Koura, Bcharre, Zgharta and El Minnie-Dennie. Tripoli + T5 has a population of 550,000 Lebanese and is currently hosting 151,345 Syrian refugees (see Table 2). Most refugees have settled in Bab al-Tibbaneh, Abou Samra and Mina in the district of Tripoli.¹¹²

Table 2 Tripoli + T5 Population Figures (Lebanese and Registered Syrian Refugee)

District	Original Population	Registered Syrian Refugees
Batroun	21,000	14,000
Bcharre	46,000	2,000
Khoura	50,000	14,000
Minnie-Dennie	118,000	52,000
Tripoli	265,000	61,000
Zgharta	50,000	11,000
Total	550,000	154,000

¹¹² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: North Governorate Profile (2014).

In this region, the most vulnerable host communities are situated concentrated in Tripoli, where more than 51 per cent of the Lebanese population live on less than US\$4 a day.¹¹³ In May 2013, a joint EU and Solidarités International (SI) report identified less than one per cent of vulnerable residents in Zgharta and Minnieh-Danniyeh to be Lebanese.¹¹⁴ However, the 2008 UNDP Poverty Assessment indicates that Minnieh-Dennieh is the poorest region in Lebanon along with Akkar, with over 60 per cent of Lebanese residents living on less than US\$4 a day.¹¹⁵

The impact of the refugee influx in Tripoli + T5 has been significant, particularly in Tripoli, Batroun and Minnieh-Dennieh. Poor service delivery, congestion (particularly in camps for Palestinian refugees) and inability to secure livelihoods have generated tensions. In addition, historical divisions among sectarian lines have intensified since the arrival of both Sunni and Alawite refugees, resulting in armed clashes and cross border shelling. Tripoli is considered a bastion of Sunnis in Lebanon and has traditionally held closer political and economic ties to Syria than to the rest of Lebanon. A small Alawite population, mostly supportive of the Syrian regime, lives in the Jabal Mohsen neighbourhood, which is surrounded by densely populated areas, including the neighbourhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh, controlled by Sunni Islamist militias. Conflict between groups in Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen neighbourhoods can be traced to the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), when the Syrian Army and Alawite supporters massacred Lebanese Sunnis and expelled Palestinian fighters from the city.

At the same time, the relationship between Palestinian and Lebanese has remained tense since the Civil War. PRS in Tripoli are mostly concentrated in Beddawi camp. The camp's population rose sharply from 16,500 2007 after the displacement of 27,000 refugees from the nearby Nahr el-Bared camp. Currently, there are 16,500 registered PRS living in the Beddawi camp in Tripoli and another 8,000 are living outside the camp.¹¹⁶ Poverty, unemployment and pre-existing tensions between different factions in and around these camps were prevalent before the arrival of PRS. In addition, an estimated 867 families of Lebanese returnees, mostly from Homs and rural Damascus, have settled in Tripoli. According to an IOM study, 85 per cent of them have never received assistance from NGOs.¹¹⁷ Food security remains their primary concern, followed by access to health care and job opportunities.¹¹⁸

3.2.1 EDUCATION

Before the Syria crisis, school enrolment in Minieh-Dennieh was 76 per cent (below the national average of 90 per cent¹¹⁹) and the gender gap among students was substantial. According to an assessment conducted by Concern Worldwide, the capacity of the education system in the region to absorb the increase in the number of students is very limited because of poor infrastructure. A study conducted by Association Libanaise pour Education et la Formation suggests that in some areas of the North, refugee children make up 90 per cent of the student body.¹²⁰ However, results from a Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) survey suggest that only 30 per cent of schools are overcrowded and that in certain areas, such as Zgharta and Koura, schools that were about to close due to low enrolment are now remaining open to incorporate Syrian refugee children.¹²¹

¹¹³ Partners for Democratic Change International and PeaceLabz, Establishing Conflict Resilient Communities in the North of Lebanon: Community Conflicts in Northern Lebanon (2013).

¹¹⁴ Solidarités International, Vulnerability Assessment Report: Zgharta and Minieh-Danniyeh Districts North Lebanon (2013).

¹¹⁵ Partners for Democratic Change International and PeaceLabz, Establishing Conflict Resilient Communities in the North of Lebanon: Community Conflicts in Northern Lebanon (2013).

¹¹⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: North Governorate Profile (2014).

¹¹⁷ International Organisation for Migration (Lebanon Mission) and Lebanese High Relief Commission, The Situation & Needs of Lebanese Returnees From Syria (2013).

¹¹⁸ International Organisation for Migration (Lebanon Mission) and Lebanese High Relief Commission, The Situation & Needs of Lebanese Returnees From Syria (2013).

¹¹⁹ WB ESEA

¹²⁰ ALEF – Act for Human Rights, Two Years On: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

¹²¹ NRC, UNHCR, Rapid Assessment of the education situation of Syrian refugee students attending Lebanese public schools in North Lebanon (2013).

3.2.2 HEALTH

The health care situation is particularly dire in Tripoli⁵. The Ministry of Public Health has delayed payments to contracted hospitals and public ones are considerably understaffed, making them unable to deal with the increasing demand on health services due to the influx of refugees.¹²² Hospitals and health care centres are particularly overcrowded in Minieh-Dennieh¹²³ and Tripoli,¹²⁴ while in the neighbourhoods of Bab al-Tabbaneh and Swaiqa in Tripoli, 90 per cent of residents do not have health insurance.

3.2.3 WATER

According to an SI study, 50 per cent of households in Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta are connected to the municipal water network, 31 per cent access water through private boreholes, and 11 per cent rely on bottled water.¹²⁵ Additionally, in Mennieh, because of its proximity to the coast, boreholes are shallow and tend to dry out in the summer. In Tripoli, water shortages are expected to worsen with the increase in demand.¹²⁶ In Tripoli, El Batroun, and El Khoura, water is provided by the North Lebanon Water Establishment.¹²⁷ An assessment conducted by Oxfam based on interviews with municipal officials and aid organisations, household surveys and focus groups determined that water in these three districts is mostly potable due to its treatment and chlorination in the North Lebanon Water Establishment's treatment plan.¹²⁸ However, NPTP officials and reviews of the WASH sector suggest otherwise.

In the North, not all water is treated and power outages often disrupt the distribution of water and can depressurize pipes, increasing the risk of contamination.¹²⁹ The use of boosting pumps used to fill in tanks connected to the water network usually disrupts the flow of water and the mismanagement of submersible pumps in boreholes often leads to system breakdowns and water shortages.¹³⁰ In non-urban areas, water may be contaminated with bacteria and water depletion is also a risk, given the poor management of water at the household level.¹³¹ At the same time, according to a Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli study of communities in Zgharta, El Khoura, El Batroun and Minnieh-Dennie in which Syrian refugees reside, most families rely on protected wells (56 per cent) or piped public networks (44 per cent) as primary water supply sources, but 81 per cent of residents believe the water is not suitable for drinking.¹³²

3.2.4 WASTE MANAGEMENT

One of the main causes for water contamination, particularly in Tripoli, is the poor solid waste management system.¹³³ In Tripoli, Mina, and Beddawi, the private company Lavajet provides this service.¹³⁴ However, its capacity is compromised by the increase of solid waste production in the past year. In addition, in Tripoli and El Khoura, because there are no adequate sewage treatment plants, wastewater and raw sewage are thrown into the sea.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ International Rescue Committee, *Reaching the Breaking Point: An IRC Briefing Note on Syrian Refugees in Lebanon* (2013).

¹²⁵ Solidarités International, *Vulnerability Assessment Report: Zgharta and Minieh-Danniyeh Districts North Lebanon* (2013).

¹²⁶ Interview with Jean Mourad, National Poverty Targeting Program, Beirut, May 2014.

¹²⁷ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, *Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon* (2013).

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment Sector Chapters, WASH, April 2014

¹³⁰ Solidarités International, *Vulnerability Assessment Report: Zgharta and Minieh-Danniyeh Districts North Lebanon* (2013).

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² CISP July 2013

¹³³ Interview with Jean Mourad, National Poverty Targeting Program, Beirut, May 2014.

¹³⁴ World Bank and United Nations, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (2013).

3.2.5 LIVELIHOODS AND LIVING COSTS

In Tripoli + T5, Lebanese families are struggling to make ends meet due to fewer income generating opportunities and higher cost of living. Although Lebanese workers continue to make up most of the labour force in the service sector, there is severe competition for jobs in construction and agriculture, and unemployment rates are on the rise.¹³⁵ In addition, wages have fallen in all sectors, particularly for low-skilled jobs in construction.¹³⁶ The construction sector has shrunk by 5 per cent because of lack of investment. Lower demand for labour and increasing competition from Syrians willing to work for less has left many Lebanese residents without jobs.¹³⁷

In the agricultural sector, the number of Lebanese workers has not changed despite the influx of refugees.¹³⁸ Wages have only fallen slightly but shifts have been shortened due to the higher availability of labourers. However, agriculture products sold in markets in Tripoli have faced competition from Syrian products, which are cheaper because they are subsidized by the Syrian government. This has changed more recently though with the upgrading of border security, reducing the supply of Syrian products and lessening the burden on local producers.¹³⁹

In the service sector, locals are facing less competition for jobs and profits have remained relatively stable. Although demand for luxury items has fallen, the increasing demand for food items, particularly since the distribution of food vouchers for refugees, has compensated for the loss. However, increased access to food items is reliant upon the continuation of the voucher program.¹⁴⁰ Lebanese-owned shops are also facing competition from newly opened Syrian ones. The latter prefer to hire Syrian employees, pay lower wages and avoid taxes, giving them the capacity to sell products at cheaper prices.¹⁴¹

Since the start of the Syria crisis, livelihoods depending on cross-border activities have also been affected. With a rise in transport barriers and the consequent rise in production costs, agriculture profits have fallen. In addition, Lebanese residents near border areas are no longer able to smuggle in crops, which were cheaper in Syria because of government subsidies.¹⁴²

In the last three years, household expenditures in Tripoli+5 have increased because of inflation at the local level. Lower wages coupled with increased job competition are exacerbating income inequality and disproportionately impacting poorer households.

3.2.6 SHELTER

Tripoli has the lowest rental prices in the country. As a result, refugees who cannot afford housing elsewhere in the country often move to this northern city. However, overcrowded conditions and a hike in rental prices have contributed to local tensions.¹⁴³

¹³⁵ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Lebanon Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA): Executive Briefing for Analyses in the Construction, Service Sector and Agricultural Labor Systems (2013).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Construction Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Constructing Market-Based Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

¹³⁸ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Agricultural Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Recommendations for Growing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Service Sector in North and Bekaa Lebanon: A Menu of Options for Supporting Livelihoods of Refugee and Host Community Families (2013).

¹⁴¹ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁴² Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security Impact Assessment and Response Plan for the Syria Crisis in the Neighbouring Countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey (2013).

¹⁴³ Interview with UNHCR official, Akkar, May 2014

3.2.7 SECURITY

In Tripoli, fighting between Sunnis from Bab-al Tabbaneh and Alawites of the pro-Syrian Arab Democratic Party from Jabal Mohsen stopped in late April when the Lebanese Armed Forces implemented a new security plan in the area.¹⁴⁴ Increasing feelings of insecurity have led people to restrict their movements at night, particularly women and children.¹⁴⁵

3.2.8 INFORMATION GAPS

No secondary data sources were found in relation to the protection of women and children in Tripoli + T5. In addition, little information was available regarding shelter, electricity and waste management issues.

3.2.9 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

In Tripoli + T5 Lebanese host communities received remarkably lower levels of NFI, food and WASH assistance than neighbouring refugee populations. Similarly, fewer Lebanese children and adolescents benefited from educational assistance, although according to activity reporting from UNHCR partners, Lebanese host communities will have indirectly benefited from the rehabilitation of ten schools and the capacity building of 180 teachers in the region.

Health activities in Tripoli + T5 predominantly served refugee patients in need of primary health care assistance. Receipt of secondary health care services was overall much lower than primary care, where, for example, 235 Lebanese in the region are reported to have benefited from secondary health care attention, from a total of 4545 patients. However, available activity data suggests that host communities will be able to benefit from longer term interventions, such as the training of 44 health professionals by the American University of Beirut.

3W data suggests that a significant amount of training was delivered for agents of change. Conflict mitigation and community participatory mechanisms were also established to facilitate fora where host communities and refugee populations could enter into dialogue to address vectors of tension. Vocational skills support was provided in some capacity by three organisations active in the area, and other groups implemented income generation and employment and market creation projects. SGBV issues were addressed by several organisations, although it is unclear from activity reporting which populations the interventions sought to target. Equally, empowerment and protection monitoring activities were implemented across the region by a number of UN and partner organisations.

Shelter issues were addressed in the region by two means: either by the rehabilitation, refurbishment, weatherproofing or improvement of shelters, collective housing, rented houses and apartments and informal settlements, or by the provision of incentives for Lebanese host communities to host refugees.

3.3 Akkar

Before the Syria crisis, Akkar had a population of 200,000, two-thirds of whom were living below the poverty line. The region now hosts an additional 96,000 registered refugees from Syria.¹⁴⁶ The refugees are living in 75 per cent of the villages in Akkar and comprise the majority of the population in Wadi Khaled, Hnaider, Maidel, Kherbet Daoud, Saadine, Tal Abbas El Charkiye, Tal Abbas El Gharibe, Bire, Kouachra, Kobbet Bchamra, Kneisseh and Dahr Leycineh. Of the villages hosting refugees, 26 per cent have informal settlements. Around 80 per cent of villages in Akkar belong to municipalities, out of which 63 per cent belong to municipal unions. The 77 villages that belong to municipalities but not unions rely on their own municipality funds for support.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Carthage Center, Understanding the Heightening Syrian Refugee Crisis and Lebanon's Political Polarization (2013).

¹⁴⁵ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: North Governorate Profile (2014).

¹⁴⁷ REACH, Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate (2014)

Akkar has received the greatest number of refugees of any district in the country along with Tripoli.¹⁴⁸ At the same time, 63 per cent of Akkar's Lebanese population lives under the poverty line and public services are among the most underdeveloped in the country.¹⁴⁹ Akkar is also one of the most unequal regions. There is widespread resentment from farmers against a government that tends to favour those who own the majority of the land and discriminates against certain groups because of their ethnic background.¹⁵⁰ Illustrating this discrimination, residents in Wadi Khaled of Bedouin origins were only granted citizenship in 1994.¹⁵¹

3.3.1 LIVELIHOODS

Before the crisis, 30 per cent of the labour force in Akkar was employed in the agriculture sector. Approximately 17.5 per cent of the district population worked in public administration, particularly the army and security forces; 14 per cent in trade; 8 per cent in education; 8.5 per cent in industry; 8 per cent in construction; and 6 per cent in transport and communication.¹⁵² In the last year, a REACH Initiative and UNHCR assessment found that residents of 85 per cent of villages in the past year reported a rise in unemployment. Residents of villages hosting refugees were more likely to report unemployment than those of villages where no refugees live. In any case, an increase in demand coupled with a decrease in trade in some areas is exerting pressure on prices and reducing households' purchasing power.¹⁵³

Like in other border areas, agriculture profits fell over the past few years due to export barriers and limited smuggling, mostly of subsidized food items, fuel, gas and mechanical parts.¹⁵⁴ In addition, the construction sector in Akkar has contracted by 72 per cent. Although traditionally both Lebanese and Syrians had an even share of the low-skilled labour force in the sector, the influx of refugees willing to work for less has displaced locals.¹⁵⁵ Lebanese-owned shops are facing competition from newly opened Syrian stores that were set up without permits; these businesses often only hire other Syrians and pay lower wages, giving them the capacity to charge less for products.¹⁵⁶

3.3.2 SHELTER

Before the refugee crisis, overcrowding was an issue in Akkar. Since the onset of the conflict in Syria and the influx of refugees, property prices have risen following an increase in demand. Rental prices have reportedly risen significantly in 77 per cent of the villages hosting refugees.¹⁵⁷ The average price of rental accommodation today is US\$120 a month per family and from US\$50 to US\$120 a month for a parcel of land in an informal settlement.¹⁵⁸ However, according to the REACH/UNHCR assessment, in the 195 villages reportedly hosting refugees, 70 per cent of the newcomers live in apartments or houses they own.

3.3.3 ELECTRICITY

According to REACH's village assessment, services most affected by the influx of refugees such as electricity, are not the primary concern of the host communities in Akkar because their level of access is relatively high. At least 75 per cent of residents in Akkar have access to electricity, although in 85 per cent of villages, electricity connections are provided only half or less than half of the day.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: North Governorate Profile (2014).

¹⁴⁹ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

¹⁵⁰ Partners for Democratic Change International and PeaceLabz, Establishing Conflict Resilient Communities in the North of Lebanon: Community Conflicts in Northern Lebanon (2013).

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ REACH, Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate (2014)

¹⁵⁴ Partners for Democratic Change International and PeaceLabz, Establishing Conflict Resilient Communities in the North of Lebanon: Community Conflicts in Northern Lebanon (2013).

¹⁵⁵ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ REACH, Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate (2014)

¹⁵⁸ Interview with UNHCR official, Akkar, May 2014

Still, half the population believes there have been no changes in the supply since the arrival of refugees; only 21 per cent complained about these services being strained. Many complained though about Syrians in informal settlements are setting up improvised connections to public electricity supplies and straining the provision of power to Lebanese households living close by. This has generated tensions and prompted locals to demand greater law enforcement.

3.3.4 WATER

Water ranks high as a priority issue for Akkar residents. Less than 50 per cent of residents in Akkar have access to organized water networks and most rely on multiple water sources, such as boreholes, piped systems, water trucking, natural sources and bottled water. Access to sufficient water was limited even before the start of the crisis.

3.3.5 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Wastewater management was also listed as a major priority for residents in Akkar. Some 60 per cent of villages reported inadequate wastewater systems, forcing many residents to rely on septic tanks. The increasing population is forcing communities to empty septic tanks more often. Still, only 20 per cent of key informants believed that the wastewater system had been significantly affected by the influx of refugees although many have expressed fear that sewage may contaminate drinking water supplies.¹⁵⁹ Wastewater management services were reportedly strained prior to the Syria crisis.

Poor solid waste management in Akkar was also reported to be a main cause for water contamination.¹⁶⁰ Municipalities are responsible for solid waste collection, but the work is financed only in some cases by municipalities and mostly directly by village residents. Villages without municipalities may contract a neighbouring municipality to complete works.¹⁶¹ Garbage collection fees in some areas have increased by 100 per cent, but no additional financing was provided to municipalities.¹⁶² In Wadi Khaled, the state appears to be non-existent so municipalities rely on credit lines to fund infrastructure projects.¹⁶³

3.3.6 HEALTH

Akkar villages listed access to health services as a priority issue for their communities. Health insurance coverage in Akkar before the crisis was 35 per cent, lower than the national average of 42 per cent.¹⁶⁴ Most residents received insurance from public sector schemes associated with the army, civil service, the National Social Security Fund, and later the NPTP. Less than one per cent of residents had private insurance. According to the REACH/UNHCR assessment, less than 25 per cent of residents have access to health care in 53 per cent of the villages in Akkar. The inability to cross borders safely has prevented the population of Akkar from accessing free healthcare services in Syria as many previously did.¹⁶⁵ Provision of health care assistance to refugees, and the appearance and spread of diseases due to the demographic increase and poor solid and water waste systems is spurring tensions among host communities historically neglected in this sector. In addition, hospital and health care centres are overcrowded in Akkar, forcing many Lebanese to seek alternative health care services.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ REACH, Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate (2014)

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Jean Mourad, National Poverty Targeting Program, Beirut, May 2014.

¹⁶¹ REACH, Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate (2014)

¹⁶² World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁶³ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁶⁴ Association Mada, Forgotten Akkar: Socioeconomic Reality of the Akkar Region. (2008)

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ International Rescue Committee, Reaching the Breaking Point: An IRC Briefing Note on Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

3.3.7 EDUCATION

School enrolment rates in Akkar were 76 per cent before the crisis, below the national average of 90 per cent.¹⁶⁷ School fees, lack of transportation services and work obligations in family businesses prevent children from attending¹⁶⁸ and there is still a considerable gender gap in enrolment and attendance.¹⁶⁹ According to a study conducted by REACH/UNHCR in March 2014,¹⁷⁰ 35 per cent of schools in Akkar are under capacity and have been able to enrol Syrian students, who now represent 20 per cent of the total student population in the district. Over half of the schools in Akkar that had already reached capacity have 17 per cent Syrian enrolment, while in those that were already overcrowded, Syrian enrolment is at 9 per cent. In Akkar, the quality of infrastructure varies by schools, but according to Concern Worldwide, the state of school facilities is adequate. The results of the REACH/UNHCR assessment, however, suggest that schools are in urgent need of rehabilitation. According to available data, more than two-thirds of the schools in Akkar have inadequate heating systems and one-fourth do not have any heating facilities. More than half of the schools lack adequate WASH facilities and 25 per cent need roof and wall repairs. In addition, some schools registered as such are dilapidated and not functioning and now serve as improvised shelter for refugees.

3.3.8 SECURITY AND PROTECTION

There is concern about the political activity of some Syrian refugees and there have been widespread reports of shelling and gunfire in Wadi Khaled and clashes between Lebanese and Syrians against the Syrian Army on the other side of the border.¹⁷¹ In addition, 30 per cent of villages surveyed by REACH reported an increase in criminality, particularly theft of livestock and electricity equipment, and in some cases, youth violence. Lebanese who did not report a rise in crime attributed feelings of safety to official or unofficial policing, the latter carried out by armed young men or neighbourhood vigilantes.¹⁷² Only 20 per cent reported a decline in their willingness to host refugees, but 75 per cent attributed an increasing feeling of insecurity due to their presence. Increasing feelings of insecurity have forced people to impose restrictions on movements at night. According to World Vision, a student from Akkar reported not going to school in the evening because of fear of wandering the streets after 4 pm.¹⁷³

Syrians also reported cases of theft – particularly of e-cards – threats, violence, and sexual harassment against women. They expressed particular concern about groups of young men patrolling the streets at night. Their fears may also be induced by the regulations a number of host villages have applied against refugees. Approximately villages have taken a variety of measures against Syrian refugees including imposing curfews, requiring identification, restricting employment, housing and residence, and limitations on operating motorcycles.

3.3.9 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Food distributions targeting Lebanese host communities were higher in Akkar than any other region of Lebanon, this can be seen as a result of Akkar being one of the most impoverished and undeveloped regions of the country. In spite of this, still in Akkar the majority of food distributions targeted Syrian refugees. Similarly, even though most NFI interventions were intended for refugee populations, relatively high numbers of Lebanese communities in the region nonetheless received NFI distributions, when compared to nationwide figures. Additionally, Lebanese farmers in the region received assistance to help improve livelihoods.

¹⁶⁷ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

¹⁶⁸ REACH/UNHCR, Akkar Schools Report, forthcoming publication (2014).

¹⁶⁹ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

¹⁷⁰ REACH Public Schools Assessment Report, Akkar Governorate (2014)

¹⁷¹ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

¹⁷² REACH, Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate (2014)

¹⁷³ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

A number of WASH programmes in Akkar were specifically delivered to host communities, and UNRWA data show that household solid waste and wastewater disposal facilities were delivered to 39 thousand Lebanese residents in Akkar. In the education sector, noticeably higher numbers of Lebanese children and youth received education assistance than in other districts nationwide, although the Syrian refugee population remained the primary target for intervention.

Between January and April 2014 it is reported that a number of organisations undertook vocational skills support, income generating, employment and market creation activities, although none delivered trainings for agents of change. Between January and May 2014 there were a total of 15 CSPs completed, however at the time of writing none were on-going. SGBV issues were addressed region-wide by a variety of humanitarian actors, and there was evidence that other organisations had implemented systematic protection monitoring activities in Akkar. Empowerment activities were also provided. Shelter needs in the district were being met in a similar manner to other areas of the country, by increasing the quality of pre-existing housing, offering incentives to host communities to accommodate refugees and improving the conditions of informal settlements.

3.4 Bekaa

The population in the Bekaa is 540,000 people, out of which 150,000 (18 per cent) live below the 2004 poverty line of less than US\$4 a day (see Table 3). By February 2014, there were 304,813 Syrian refugees registered in the valley. Baalbek and Zahle have received the greatest number of refugees.¹⁷⁴

Table 3 Bekaa Population Figures (Lebanese and Registered Syrian Refugee)

District	Original Population	Registered Syrian Refugees
Baalbek	227,000	93,000
Hermel	36,000	5,000
Rachaiya	33,000	10,000
West Bekaa	65,000	53,000
Zahle	177,000	143,000
Total	540,000	305,000

Around 8,500 PRS, one fifth of the total PRS in Lebanon, are living in Bekaa. Most of them are living outside Wavel camp in the outskirts of Baalbek. In addition, almost 10,000 Lebanese returnees, mostly from Homs and rural Damascus, have settled in different communities in the Bekaa. In the city of Hermel alone, there are 470 Lebanese returnee families.¹⁷⁵ According to an IOM study, 85 per cent have never received assistance from NGOs,¹⁷⁶ although UNHCR and ICRC do have specific programs targeting Lebanese returnees.¹⁷⁷ Food security and access to health care remain the primary concerns of Lebanese returnees in the Bekaa followed by shelter and job opportunities.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: Bekaa Governorate Profile (2014).

¹⁷⁵ Paula Astatih, "Lebanon's Own Refugees," *Asharq al-Awsat*, 27 April 2014.

¹⁷⁶ International Organisation for Migration (Lebanon Mission) and Lebanese High Relief Commission, *The Situation & Needs of Lebanese Returnees From Syria* (2013).

¹⁷⁷ Paula Astatih, Op.Cit.

In Bekaa, the most pressing issues include rising rent prices, which are leaving many Lebanese families homeless, water supply shortages and the accumulation of solid waste which is contaminating drinking and irrigation water resources. In addition, the presence of a multitude of armed groups and their supporters in areas of relatively weak central government influence has resulted in armed clashes, terrorist attacks and cross border shelling, curbing the ability of host communities and refugees to secure their livelihoods.

3.4.1 EDUCATION

According to a World Bank assessment, in Zahle-Al Maalaqa there are 16 public schools, 17 private ones, seven technical schools and nine schools for children with special needs.¹⁷⁸ The education system in Hermel includes 17 schools (nine public and eight private) and three vocational institutes (two public and one private). However, the overall capacity of schools in Hermel is only of 6,000 students due to poor infrastructure and lack of space. Most Syrian children of school age could not enrol for new classes in the afternoon shift, as decreed by the Ministry of Education, due to a shortage of staff.¹⁷⁹

3.4.2 HEALTH

Hospitals are overcrowded given the increase in demand from Syrian refugees, particularly in West Bekaa, Baalbek, and the town of Qaa in El Hermel, where the number of registered cases doubled.¹⁸⁰ In December 2012, Syrian refugees represented 40 per cent of the primary health care patients.¹⁸¹ Like in the North, the Ministry of Public Health has delayed payments to contracted hospitals and public ones are considerably understaffed, making them unable to deal with the increasing demand of medical attention due to the influx of refugees.¹⁸²

3.4.3 ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Power shortages and lack of fuel in the winter have forced families in Zahle-Al Malaqa to rely on firewood and burning of plastic to keep warm.¹⁸³

3.4.4 WATER

Most houses in Bekaa are connected to the water network, which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Energy and Water but in poor condition due to age. Spring and bottled water are alternative sources of water for drinking and domestic use.¹⁸⁴ In Qaa, 85 per cent of houses where Syrian refugees live are connected to the running water network, while only 60 per cent of households have access to that service in El Hermel. Those that are not linked to the water network in Qaa and Hermel are served by over 600 artesian wells in each district.¹⁸⁵ This suggests that access to the running water network for host communities may be over 85 per cent in Qaa and over 60 per cent in Hermel, although that cannot be confirmed based on secondary data available.

However, media reports indicate that in the past months, residents in Qaa had only two to three hours of running water a day, every other day. After the driest year in the past 100 years having received only 240 mml of rain compared to the average 600 mml, people fear water shortages are going to worsen. Residents are also holding the municipal council responsible for shortages, accusing officials of corruption and mismanagement of funds.

¹⁷⁸ World Bank, Rapid Needs Assessment: Zahle – Al Maalaqa (2013)

¹⁷⁹ World Bank, Rapid Needs Assessment: Qaa and Hermel (2013)

¹⁸⁰ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

¹⁸¹ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ World Bank, Rapid Needs Assessment: Zahle – Al Maalaqa (2013)

¹⁸⁵ World Bank, Rapid Needs Assessment: Qaa and Hermel (2013)

In 2001, a law passed ordering municipal water committees to fall under the regional Water Authority, but four out of the seven local water committees in the Bekaa still operate independently. Some believe water committees are unwilling to work with the regional Water Authority for fear of opening their financial records, which would reveal the corrupt administration of funds.¹⁸⁶

Assessments conducted on the living conditions of refugees in Aarsal suggest that access to the running water network for Lebanese is rare. However, this could not be confirmed due to the lack of secondary data. In Aarsal, 77 per cent of housing units have access to water through water trucking and communal distribution systems. Over 80 per cent of households pay out of pocket for the water they consume, although only 45 per cent of them find it sufficient to cover their needs. Only 54 per cent of buildings have their own water tanks and 46 per cent of families who reside in buildings without water tanks have their own household water containers. Of the 44 per cent of the population who use these sources as their primary drinking water source, only 37 per cent consider it safe water to drink.¹⁸⁷

3.4.5 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Solid waste and sewage management pose problems in Zahle and El Hermel districts, particularly in Qaa.¹⁸⁸ In El Hermel, the influx of Syrian refugees is considered the cause for the 13 per cent increase in black water levels produced.¹⁸⁹ In Qaa, there is no treatment network, so wastewater and raw sewage are polluting water resources and agricultural fields. In Qaa, Syrians are considered responsible for the 50 per cent increase in black water production. The municipalities have resorted to emptying tanks with black water; currently 1,200 tanks are being emptied regularly.¹⁹⁰

In the North, Central, and West Bekaa, 96 per cent of villages have public waste management services. Most municipalities are responsible for the collection of solid waste and 67 per cent do it for free. In addition, 67 per cent municipalities have treatment plants: 38 per cent burn waste, 22 per cent use landfilling systems, and only 9 per cent - those close to Zahle and able to use the city's treatment plant –recycle.¹⁹¹ The villages benefiting from the dumpsite in Zahle-Al Maalaqa are Taalabaya, Saadnayel, Chtoura, Jdita, Al Mrayiat, Turbol, Ablah, Al Fourzoi and Riyaaq.¹⁹² The municipalities of Qaa and Hermel are responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste. However, waste is dumped in sites between one and six kilometres away from the village centres, where between 60 and 150 tons of waste is disposed weekly.¹⁹³

3.4.6 LIVELIHOODS AND LIVING COSTS

As in the North, families in the Bekaa are struggling to make ends meet due to a decrease in income generating opportunities, higher costs of living and an inability to conduct cross-border business like they used to – particularly the smuggling of cheaper subsidized crops from Syria.¹⁹⁴ Despite a fall in wages, household expenditure has increased, widening the income gap of the poor. In the municipality of Labweh, inflation has reportedly risen by 40 per cent.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁶ Justin Salhani, "Claims of Corruption Add to al-Qaa Water Woes," *The Daily Star Lebanon*, 17 April 2014.

¹⁸⁷ Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment Sector Chapters, Shelter, April 2014

¹⁸⁸ World Bank and United Nations, Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict (2013).

¹⁸⁹ World Bank, Rapid Needs Assessment: Qaa and Hermel (2013)

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ ACF, Waste Management Assessment, Bekaa: North, Central and West Bekaa (2012)

¹⁹² World Bank, Rapid Needs Assessment: Zahle – Al Maalaqa (2013)

¹⁹³ World Bank, Rapid Needs Assessment: Qaa and Hermel (2013)

¹⁹⁴ Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security Impact Assessment and Response Plan for the Syria Crisis in the Neighbouring Countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey (2013).

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

Competition for jobs in the construction and agriculture sectors is raising unemployment rates and wages have fallen in all sectors, particularly for low-skilled jobs.¹⁹⁶ Municipal officials in Aarsal and Labweh say competition for jobs is not affecting the Lebanese as much because Syrians take jobs locals do not want to perform.¹⁹⁷ For example, the number of Lebanese working in agriculture in the Bekaa has not changed despite the influx of refugees, but wages have fallen considerably (more so than in the North) and shifts have been shortened due to the increased labour supply.¹⁹⁸ It is true that, in Bekaa, low-skilled jobs in construction were traditionally reserved for Syrians, and the Lebanese poor continue to be reluctant in taking on such jobs. However, in some cases, Syrians are replacing skilled Lebanese workers as the former accept lower wages and now represent almost 70 per cent of the skilled work force in the governorate.

In the Bekaa, about 10 per cent of the labour force works in agriculture, mostly as unskilled workers. Approximately 18 per cent of farmers own small parcels of land and traditionally employ migrant workers, while 36 per cent work for big landowners. Farmers still have access to small-scale processing and cold storage facilities, allowing them to adapt their produce to market demands and store it to control supply and prices. However, some sorting and packing facilities have been closing mainly due to the increasing difficulties in exporting¹⁹⁹ and competition with Syrian products.²⁰⁰

Like in the North, locals are facing less competition for jobs in the service sector and profits have remained relatively stable. However, the increased demand for food relies upon the continuation of the voucher program. Lebanese owned shops and restaurants are also facing competition from newly opened Syrian ones, which hire Syrians only, pay lower wages and avoid taxes.²⁰¹ The smuggling business has received a fatal blow first because of the insecurity of crossing borders and later because of the closure of borders in May 2014. The tourism sector in the Bekaa, particularly in Baalbek, has shrunk by more than half compared to before the onset of the Syria Crisis.

3.4.7 SHELTER

As in other areas where population density spiked due to the influx of refugees, rental prices in Bekaa has nearly doubled in the past six months, and even tripled in Hermel.²⁰² The cost of land has more than tripled over the past five years, rising from US\$600 to US\$2,500 per square meter. Although this is partly a result of the boom in the construction and real estate sectors between 2006 and 2010, it is also due to the increase in the construction of hotels and restaurants to attend to the demand of refugees.²⁰³ In any case, the pronounced increase in the cost of rental accommodation and land is likely to force Lebanese out of their homes in search of more affordable options.

A case study on a family in Kabb Elias included in a World Vision report suggests the problem of rising rent prices is a widespread issue in the valley and one of the main vectors of tension. Some families have been pushed out of the houses they were renting because Syrians were able to pay more, while others have been able to stay only by paying rent 'in kind', by working to maintain the building, for example.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁶ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Lebanon Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA): Executive Briefing for Analyses in the Construction, Service Sector and Agricultural Labor Systems (2013).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Agricultural Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Recommendations for Growing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

¹⁹⁹ Stephanie d'Arc Taylor, "Lebanese Christians 'Prefer' Assad Victory," *Al-Jazeera English*, 20 October 2013.

²⁰⁰ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Agricultural Labor Market System in North and Bekaa, Lebanon: Recommendations for Growing Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees and Host Community Families (2013).

²⁰¹ International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) of the Service Sector in North and Bekaa Lebanon: A Menu of Options for Supporting Livelihoods of Refugee and Host Community Families (2013).

²⁰² Mercy Corps, Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon (2013).

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

3.4.8 SECURITY

There have been armed clashes in eastern Baalbek and north of the valley, including fighting between Shias from Labweh and Sunni Lebanese and Syrians from Arsal.²⁰⁵ There has been cross-border fire and shelling, particularly near the towns of Hermel, Arsal, Labweh and Nabi Othman,²⁰⁶ as well as several terrorist attacks against checkpoints.²⁰⁷

Conflict has been ongoing due to the presence of several groups of Syrian rebel fighters in the area, including the Free Syrian Army, as well as terrorist groups, such as Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.²⁰⁸ The siege of the city of Arsal by pro-Hezbollah residents of the neighbouring town of Labweh is ongoing, and has sparked protests in Arsal and encouraged the Lebanese Armed Forces to be deployed in the area.²⁰⁹

The upgraded security measures for border management due to territorial gains by the Syrian Regime and Hezbollah has reduced opportunities for cross-border fighting between Sunni rebels on one hand, and Syrian and Hezbollah forces on the other. In addition, Hezbollah has strengthened its aid distribution networks for both local communities and refugees out of fear that refugee support networks may serve as covers for anti-Assad activities.²¹⁰

The poor security situation and the inability of families to secure livelihoods are posing serious threats to women and children. Prostitution involving women and girls is becoming increasingly common, as well as early marriages arranged between refugee families and men from Lebanon or the Gulf in exchange for shelter or goods.²¹¹

3.4.9 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Food distributions in the Bekka were heavily weighted towards refugee populations, and not host communities. Similarly, NFIs were distributed amongst refugee and local groups, but were again significantly more targeted towards refugee populations.

The education sector in the Bekka received substantial aid from the UN and UNHCR partner organisations, and thus was able to engage in education-strengthening activities and capacity building training for teachers. Through vast majority of the recipients of these interventions were refugees, Lebanese host communities arguably benefit from these types of longer term interventions. Similarly, primary and secondary health care assistance was provided in the region by a variety of humanitarian actors, and most of the recipients of medical attention were not of Lebanese origin.

Numerous community social cohesion activities were underway or had already been in the district at the time of writing. A variety of youth projects were taking place, some of which already included both Syrian and Lebanese youths, and others which had projected to expand to host community youths in the near future.

3.5 South

The population in the South is 747,475, out of which 249,169 live below the 2004 poverty line of less than US\$4 a day. By February 2014, there were 113,989 Syrian refugees registered in the South. Sidon and Tyre have received the greatest number of refugees.²¹²

²⁰⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: Bekaa Governorate Profile (2014).

²⁰⁶ "Syrian Warplanes Raid Arsal Outskirts," 26 May 2014.

²⁰⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: Bekaa Governorate Profile (2014).

²⁰⁸ "Syrian Warplanes Raid Arsal Outskirts," 26 May 2014.

²⁰⁹ Dana Khraiche, Rakan al-Fakih, "Arsal Siege Sparks Widespread Protests," The Daily Star, 19 May 2014.

²¹⁰ International Crisis Group, Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon (2013).

²¹¹ Interview with Jean Baptiste Prequel, Doctoral Fellow at Institut Français du Proche-Orient (Ifpo), Beirut, 8 May 2014.

²¹² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lebanon: South Governorate Profile (2014).

Table 4 South Population Figures (Lebanese and Registered Syrian Refugee)

District	Original Population	Registered Syrian Refugees
Bent Jbeil	66,000	6,500
Jezzine	20,000	2,500
Hasbaya	30,000	4,500
Marjaayoun	53,000	6,500
Nabatiyeh	125,000	25,000
Saida	250,000	42,000
Tyre	200,000	27,000
Total	747,000	114,000

It is estimated that over 500 Lebanese returnees, mostly from Homs and rural Damascus, have settled in different communities in the South, mostly in Nabatiyeh. According to an IOM study,²¹³ 85 per cent of them have never received assistance from NGOs and shelter, food security and access to water supply remain their primary concerns. In addition, there are 16,000 PRS in the Palestinian refugee camps in Sidon and 9,500 in Tyre.²¹⁴

As the situation worsens in the North and Bekaa, increasing numbers of refugees are settling in the South. According to a 2013 Mercy Corps assessment, it is popularly conceived that refugee fighters stay in the North while those who want to escape violence move to the South. However, the closure of borders is now an impediment for fighters to cross back to Syria to fight and may encourage even more refugees to move to the southern part of the country.²¹⁵

The impact of the influx of refugees has not yet caused severe strain on host communities with the exception of areas of Sidon and Tyre, since Palestinian refugee camps in both cities are overcrowded. In many areas, potential tensions between locals and newcomers have prompted strong involvement of local authorities, either through the provision of aid or the establishment of restrictions of movement on refugees. In some localities, local authorities provide services to both refugee and host communities. Some local authorities are determined to prevent the influx of refugees from becoming a source of tension that could be used as political leverage against certain groups. However, refugees in need have not always welcomed aid from these groups. There is limited information about the provision of services in the region, particularly related to health care and education, but findings suggest that water supply and waste management are the two major issues of concern.

3.5.1 HEALTH

Amel Association reported that health care centres in the South are overcrowded and their capacity to attend to the needs of the local Lebanese community has decreased, forcing many to seek private health care services.²¹⁶ In Sidon, public health care facilities are comparatively better, and attract people from around the region but have only capacity of about 1,000 beds.²¹⁷

²¹³ International Organisation for Migration (Lebanon Mission) and Lebanese High Relief Commission, *The Situation & Needs of Lebanese Returnees From Syria* (2013).

²¹⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Lebanon: South Governorate Profile* (2014).

²¹⁵ Mercy Corps, *Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon* (2013).

²¹⁶ Interview with Virginie Lefevre, Amel Association, Beirut, May 2014.

²¹⁷ Omar Abdulaziz Hallaj, *Saida Urban Sustainable Development Strategy, Strategic Diagnosis Report*, Mediterranean Network for the Promotion of Urban Sustainable Development Strategies, 2012

3.5.2 WATER

Water supply shortages in Sidon are reportedly becoming more commonplace because of rapid urbanisation, the depletion of underground water resources and leakages in the piped network. Water tanks are not filled often enough to meet demand and many residents are installing private tanks.²¹⁸

3.5.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management does not appear to be a problem in Jezzine and Nabatiyeh yet.²¹⁹ The Tyre municipality is implementing new cash generating projects to cover expenses, while Anjar is relying on international funding.²²⁰

3.5.4 LIVELIHOODS AND LIVING COSTS

The municipality of Sidon suggested that there is no competition for jobs between Lebanese and Syrian refugees as Syrians are taking jobs that the Lebanese are not willing to perform.²²¹ Representatives of the municipalities in Jezzine and Nabatiyeh also suggested that there is not much job competition in their areas because most local Lebanese are skilled or professional workers and have jobs with the government or small businesses. Syrian refugees are mostly employed as unskilled workers and therefore compete with low-income unskilled Lebanese labourers, who represent only a small portion of the workforce in the South. Given the low competition for jobs, wages have not decreased substantially in the South.²²² Moreover, refugees are reportedly using their own money to buy food because no food vouchers have been distributed. The restricted income of the newcomers has limited the positive impact on food markets in contrast to other regions of the country.²²³ However, municipal officials suggest inflation has risen by up to 50 per cent in Tyre, 100 per cent in Majdel Anjar and 200 per cent in Sidon.²²⁴

3.5.5 SHELTER

Shelter is more widely available in the South than in the rest of the country given the comparatively low number of refugees settled in the region. The exceptions are Sidon and Tyre, where there is overcrowding, particularly in Palestinian refugee camps. Syrian refugees in Tyre, for example, have been found living in abandoned schools and tents.²²⁵ Rental prices in Jezzine and Nabatiyeh have gone up by 25-50 per cent because of increased demand for housing. Currently, 80 per cent of refugees in the area are renting living spaces. In Nabatiyeh, unfinished houses were built with subsidies provided by the government after the 2006 war and two NGOs (their names are unknown) are rebuilding them to provide public housing and lower the pressure on rental prices. However, there is still supply for housing so these public housing projects are unlikely to lower prices.²²⁶ At the same time, municipal authorities in both Jezzine and Nabatiyeh have expressed a willingness to provide refugees with free housing to avoid the formation of informal settlements,²²⁷ while other local authorities are assisting many by paying a portion or the totality of their rent.²²⁸

²¹⁸ Omar Abdulaziz Hallaj, Saida Urban Sustainable Development Strategy, Strategic Diagnosis Report, Mediterranean Network for the Promotion of Urban Sustainable Development Strategies, 2012

²¹⁹ Swiss Solidar, Needs Assessment Report: Nabatieh and Jezzine Districts, Southern Lebanon (2013).

²²⁰ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Swiss Solidar, Needs Assessment Report: Nabatieh and Jezzine Districts, Southern Lebanon (2013).

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

²²⁵ "Syrian Refugees Head to Lebanon Shia South," *IRIN*, 6 September 2013.

²²⁶ Swiss Solidar, Needs Assessment Report: Nabatieh and Jezzine Districts, Southern Lebanon (2013).

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Paula Astatih, "Lebanon's Own Refugees," *Asharq al-Awsat*, 27 April 2014.

3.5.6 SECURITY

There has been an increase in prostitution, as well as in the reports of petty theft and child begging. There is no proof of refugees being responsible for the increasing number of crimes but residents in the South still associate refugee presence with the rising levels of insecurity.²²⁹ In Jezzine, a group of Syrian men were beaten by a group of Lebanese men when they congregated together on a main road at night. The police intervened in favour of the Lebanese. In different areas of the South, it is not uncommon for refugees to receive spontaneous home visits from the police.²³⁰

The municipal governments in Jezzine and Nabatiyeh see the presence of refugees as a potential security threat and have therefore imposed curfews on newcomers. Two municipalities, Adfa and Kefar Roummane, are not accepting any more refugees. It is unclear, however, whether they have the capacity to enforce the ban.²³¹ In Nabatiyeh, curfews for refugees extend from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. and in Jezzine from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. In Jezzine, refugees reported that women and children can leave their houses during the day only when absolutely necessary and must keep doors and windows shut. Refugee men can only congregate in public spaces between 9 and 10 a.m. to look for work.²³²

3.5.7 INFORMATION GAPS

Very limited secondary data information was found on the provision of basic services and access to public resources and infrastructure in the South. No information was found specifically regarding education and protection issues.

3.5.8 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Food was distributed to refugees in the South, but, notably, none was given by organisations partnered with UNHCR to Lebanese host communities. NFIs were also delivered to refugee populations in much larger quantities than those reserved for hosting communities.

WASH programmes in the South were for the benefit of both host and refugee populations, and provided clean water, as well as access to waste water and solid waste disposal mechanisms to both population groups. Although information gaps exist about public resources and infrastructure in the South, particularly in regard to education issues, analysis of UN agency and partner activity data reveals that between January and April 2014, ten organisations were engaging in education assistance. The scope of the organisations' activities targeted both host and refugee populations, although refugee children and adolescents benefited from education assistance in much higher numbers. Additionally, capacity building training was given to teachers and a number of schools in the region were rehabilitated.

Significant numbers of people received both primary and secondary health care assistance in the South between January and April 2014 (>175 000 and 10 000 respectively), but no Lebanese received secondary care attention.

Shelter and Livelihood activities were being undertaken by UN and UNHCR partner organisations in the South in a similar manner to other regions; including income generation, employment and market creation projects. Community participatory mechanisms included conflict scans and spaces for inter-group dialogue. Protection monitoring activities were being delivered by twenty organisations – including UNRWA and UNHCR – at the time of writing, and similarly, SGBV issues were being addressed by twelve organisations.

²²⁹ "Syrian Refugees Head to Lebanon Shia South," *IRIN*, 6 September 2013.

²³⁰ Interview with Emily Jacquard, Country Director at Search For Common Ground, Beirut, May 2014.

²³¹ Swiss Solidar, Needs Assessment Report: Nabatieh and Jezzine Districts, Southern Lebanon (2013).

²³² *Ibid.*

4. VECTORS OF TENSION IN HOST COMMUNITIES

The following section first considers vectors of tension in host communities on a national level, then further disaggregates the information by UN operational area in Lebanon. Overall, host community coping mechanisms – and in particular, trust in government institutions to adequately address issues that arise – strongly influence national perceptions of the Syrian refugee influx. Additionally, vectors of tension vary significantly by region, according to local differences in government capacity, municipal and political structures and number of refugees present, and are further discussed below.

4.1 National trends

At the start of the conflict in Syria, Lebanese communities were receptive to hosting Syrian refugees. Their hospitality soon began to wane though with increased strain on the economy and the rising number of security incidents that followed the refugee influx. Increased tension between host communities and refugees stems mostly from structural problems that predate the refugee crisis but that have been exacerbated by higher labour supply and increased demand for services, food and shelter. The coping mechanisms host communities had developed to deal with Lebanon's myriad of problems are now insufficient and Syrians are blamed for structural inefficiencies. Low trust in government institutions and their capacity to deal effectively with the consequences of the refugee influx are also a cause for concern.

Negative opinions about Syrian refugees stem partly from a belief that their presence poses a security threat and is hurting the economy by competing with locals for jobs and lowering wages. A poll conducted by FAFO among 900 Lebanese between May and June 2013²³³ shows that only 11 per cent think Syrians should be able to enter Lebanon freely. In fact, more than 53 per cent of respondents believe Lebanon should not receive any more refugees and patrol its borders more closely. Likewise, 98 per cent think the border with Syria should be more policed, while 31 per cent think it should be closed.

The FAFO poll also found that 70 per cent of respondents supported the idea of UN-supported refugee camps though 51 per cent believed this to be the responsibility of the government. These results coincide with findings from the World Vision study. Although camps risk becoming militarized, most Lebanese believe they would reduce the strain on public services and the pressure on rent prices and allow for more targeted and efficient assistance.²³⁴ However, according to FAFO, 95 per cent believe that the international community should assume the cost of hosting Syrian refugees. In addition, 72 per cent of respondents believe Syrians should not be allowed to live in Palestinian camps.

The GoL has echoed public sentiments regarding the refugee influx into Lebanon. In late May, the Minister of Interior announced that refugees returning to Syria after 1 June 2014 would be stripped of their refugee status on return to Lebanon. On 4 June, the Minister of Social Affairs, Rashid Derbas, also suggested that those fleeing from areas in Syria considered safe (i.e. under government control) would not be allowed to enter Lebanon. On 9 June, a committee approved the first decree while the second is still pending approval.

These reforms did not arrive unannounced. On 23 May 2014, Minister of Economy, Alain Hakim, stated that Lebanon was planning to restrict the entry of refugees from Syria and allow the establishment of formal refugee camps in the country.²³⁵ Foreign Minister, Gebran Bassil, of the March 8 aligned Free Patriotic Movement called earlier for the deportation of all refugees from Lebanon aside from exceptional cases and suspension of direct assistance.²³⁶

²³³ FAFO, High Lebanese Fear of New Civil War; Ambivalent Attitudes Towards Syrian Refugees (2013).

²³⁴ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

²³⁵ Venetia Rainey, "Lebanon to End Open-Border Policy With Cap on Refugees," *Daily Star Lebanon*, 16 May 2014.

²³⁶ Naharnet Newsdesk, "Bassil Warns Direct Assistance to Refugees Encourages Their Stay in Lebanon," *Naharnet*, 6 May 2014.

At the same time, Derbas, close to the March 14 Future Movement, had admitted that the refugee influx overwhelmed Lebanon's capacity to provide shelter and services and that further assistance from the UN and Arab States was needed to find a long-term solution to the crisis.²³⁷

PRS entering Lebanon face even tougher restrictions. PRS are required to request an entry visa at the Lebanese embassy in Damascus or hold a pre-existing residency permit in order to enter Lebanon. The only alternative is to receive a 24-hour transit visa that allows Palestinians to travel from the border with Syria to Beirut's airport and fly out of the country. Meanwhile, the GoL has announced that Palestinians already living in Lebanon with residency permits will not receive extensions.

4.1.1 ECONOMIC IMPACT

Numerous assessments conducted across Lebanon suggest that the main source of tension between Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees is socioeconomic rather than sectarian or ethnic.²³⁸ According to the FAFO poll, 90 per cent of Lebanese believe that Syrians are hurting the economy, 82 per cent think Syrians are taking their jobs and 75 per cent believe that the increase in labour supply due to the influx of refugees is lowering wages. In addition, three-fourths of respondents believe the refugee crisis has reduced GoL's capacity to provide services. Furthermore, 63 per cent believe refugees are being supported financially to an unfair degree since host communities are not receiving any assistance. However, 13 per cent admitted that their income had increased because they were leasing property to Syrians.

Resentment among Lebanese has led many to scapegoat Syrians for structural problems that existed before the refugee crisis, such as unemployment, insufficient electricity and water supply, and poor waste management services. In many cases, accusations against Syrians are unfounded and based on rumours or prejudice, usually perpetuated by local media.²³⁹

However, according to a study conducted by Mercy Corps in September 2013,²⁴⁰ a positive outlook on the future of the economic situation and wellbeing among Lebanese and Syrian communities correlates with more positive impressions of the other group.²⁴¹ Lebanese who believed their wellbeing would improve in the next three to four months had a positive or strongly positive opinion of Syrians, while those who were concerned about their economic futures held a negative impression of Syrian refugees.

Lebanese communities also tend to have more positive perceptions of Syrian refugees if they have a higher number of coping mechanisms to deal with household economic insecurity. In addition, higher levels of interaction between Lebanese and Syrians, the more positive opinions are of each other and the less prone individuals are to resort to violence to achieve their means. For example, Lebanese who host Syrian families have more positive opinions about the refugees, while Syrians who maintain economic interactions with members of their host community tend to have a better impression of the Lebanese. Lebanese women seem to have more positive opinions of refugees than men.²⁴²

4.1.2 SECURITY THREATS

The poll conducted by FAFO shows that there is widespread concern about the influx of refugees and the government's capacity to deal with the resulting humanitarian crisis and security situation in the country.²⁴³

²³⁷ Minister: Lebanon Reached Refugee Limit," *The Daily Star Lebanon*, 3 May 2014.

²³⁸ Interview with Emily Jacquard, Country Director at Search For Common Ground, Beirut, May 2014.

²³⁹ Search for Common Ground and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Host Communities and Refugees Conflict Scan: Presentation to the Social Cohesion Working Group (2014).

²⁴⁰ Mercy Corps, *Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon* (2013).

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ FAFO, *High Lebanese Fear of New Civil War; Ambivalent Attitudes Towards Syrian Refugees* (2013).

Lebanese respondents who held positive perceptions about their local government were less likely to resort to violence but both Lebanese and Syrian refugees reported that the use of violence to support a political cause can be justified.²⁴⁴ According to FAFO, more than half of Lebanese feel they cannot rely on the central government and 90 per cent think the conflict can further hinder the GoL's ability to protect the population. At the local level, Lebanese tend to rely on political parties or communal leaders. Only residents in the South expressed confidence in the municipal governments' capacity to resolve issues. Still, FAFO indicates that 80 per cent of respondents trust the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).²⁴⁵ However, a 2013 Mercy Corps study indicated that in threatening situations, only 22 per cent of respondents would turn to LAF while 53 per cent prefer approaching local police.

Furthermore, more than half of Lebanese respondents (52 per cent) to the FAFO poll see refugees as a security threat and 40 per cent think they cannot be trusted. Some 61 per cent of respondents do not want to have Syrians as neighbours; this is more prevalent among youth (81 per cent) and Maronites (78 per cent). Although intermarriage has traditionally been one of the means of bridging divisions between citizens of the two countries, 82 per cent of Lebanese today would not feel comfortable if a family member married a Syrian.²⁴⁶

In addition, many respondents reported concerns about the outbreak of a sectarian conflict, though responses varied significantly based on sectarian membership. Approximately 71 per cent of Lebanese FAFO poll respondents believed that the crisis would spark a sectarian conflict while 67 per cent think there is going to be a civil war. Proportionally more Sunnis believed violence would erupt (53 per cent) than Shias (19 per cent) while 81 per cent of Sunnis thought the situation would evolve into a civil war compared to 57 per cent of Shias.

Syrians were more inclined to have a positive opinion of the Lebanese but Mercy Corps focus group participants were quick to express feelings of humiliation and report incidents of discrimination and sexual harassment during their time in Lebanon. In addition, Syrians staying in touch with their relatives or friends in their areas of origin and following events in Syria more closely are more likely to resort to violence.²⁴⁷

Many Lebanese are upset about the influx of Syrians affecting the sectarian balance in their communities. There is founded on fears that the influx of refugees will affect the sectarian balance in the country.²⁴⁸ Christians represented 54 per cent of the population in 1932, when the last census was conducted in Lebanon. As the majority, they enjoyed greater political power, specifically regarding the office of the president and a greater number of seats in Parliament. Their proportional size was reduced due to the growth of other population groups and the influx of nearly half a million Palestinians. The Taif Accords signed in 1990 to put an official end to the civil war changed the power-sharing Parliamentary system to evenly divide seats for Muslims and Christians, and transfer greater decision-making powers to the Sunni Prime Minister and away from the figure of the President.

While Rafik Hariri strengthened the political influence of Sunnis in the country and Shia Hezbollah, backed by the Syrian regime, augmented its authority in Parliament, Christian parties remained on the margin of Lebanese political decision-making and were forced to compromise. However, certain areas of the country remain under their control, such as Mount Lebanon and some towns in the South and the Bekaa. The influx of Sunni Syrian refugees is tilting the balance of power at both the national and local levels, increasing fears among Christians that the demographic shift could force an eventual change in Lebanon's system of confessionalism. This fear prompted the denial of Lebanese citizenship to Palestine refugees and has resurfaced with the influx of over 1 million Syrian refugees in the past years.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Venetia Rainey, "Lebanon's Refugee Influx Alarms Christians," *Al-Jazeera English*, 11 May 2014.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

4.2 Regional and demographic variances and specificities

The impact of the refugee influx varies by region and is linked with the concentration of refugees in each area and pre-Crisis vulnerabilities of host communities. In the South, the relatively low proportion of refugees has had minimal effects on water and electricity supply. In Akkar and Bekaa, however, already poor host communities are facing rising unemployment, struggling to cope with price hikes on basic staples, and enduring shelling, cross-border fighting and terrorist attacks in border areas.

At the same time, while in Tripoli + T5, Akkar, and border areas in Bekaa where government authority is absent or weak and people have relied on aid organisations as part of their coping strategies, stronger municipal and political structures in the South have managed to deter conflict so far and kept NGO presence on the side-lines. Consequently, host communities in different regions have diverse experiences of, and reactions to, the Syria refugee crisis. The following sections provide a brief description of the impact of the refugee influx into Lebanon by UNHCR operational area. The sections detailing information from Akkar and Tripoli + T5 have been combined as many sources of data classified regions by governorate.²⁵⁰

4.2.1 BEIRUT AND MOUNT LEBANON

In Beirut and Mount Lebanon there is a widespread belief that many Syrians are better off than Lebanese. Given the rise in rental prices and increased competition for jobs, Lebanese have lost their jobs and been forced to leave their homes, some of which are now occupied by refugees. Resentment of refugees is also common given that Syrians receive food vouchers and assistance that appears to be of greater monetary value than those received by the Lebanese.²⁵¹ Additional information from stakeholder analysis corroborates secondary data showing differences in host and refugee assistance, with the vast majority of humanitarian aid across all sectors being specifically targeted to only the refugee populations.

Furthermore, Syrians are blamed for rising crime rates, particularly in Beirut.²⁵² Hezbollah and Amal have set up curfews in Shia areas, where the lower costs of living have attracted many poor refugees. At the same time, however, many high-income Syrian families who moved to Beirut from Damascus or Aleppo at the beginning of the war in Syria have, to a certain extent, integrated into the Lebanese Sunni urban elite.²⁵³

According to the FAFO poll, 63 per cent of Lebanese residents in Mount Lebanon believe the country should not allow any more Syrian refugees, a figure higher than the national average (53 per cent).²⁵⁴ Christians in Mount Lebanon fear the increasing number of Sunni refugees in the country that may offset the sectarian balance while Druze communities are reportedly wary of the settlement of extremist fighters in the area. In Beirut, only 53 per cent of residents trust the central government. Although this figure is higher than the national average (49 per cent),²⁵⁵ the poor trust on local and national authorities to solve communal problems contributes to the general feeling of vulnerability.

4.2.2 TRIPOLI + T5 AND AKKAR

Resentment of refugees in the North is probably the highest in the country. According to FAFO, more than 76 per cent of the respondents in the North, compared to the national average of 54 per cent, think the country should not receive more refugees.

²⁵⁰ The North governorate includes Akkar district as well as all districts in Tripoli + T5.

²⁵¹ World Vision, *Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon* (2013).

²⁵² Carine Torbey, *Op.Cit.*

²⁵³ Elie Hajj, "Syria's Wealthy Refugees Wait Out War in Beirut." *Al-Monitor*, 2013.

²⁵⁴ FAFO, *High Lebanese Fear of New Civil War; Ambivalent Attitudes Towards Syrian Refugees* (2013).

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

There is widespread belief that Syrians are hurting the economy and up to 91 per cent of respondents believe refugees are taking their jobs and bringing down wages.²⁵⁶ In addition, prostitution involving Syrian women and girls is becoming increasingly commonplace, and Lebanese women and men have expressed concern that these practices will degrade the moral values of their communities.²⁵⁷

Negative attitudes towards refugees have been exacerbated by what they consider an unfair distribution of aid. FAFO results show that 74 per cent of people in the North, compared to 63 per cent at the national level, believe Syrians are being supported financially to an unfair degree.

Residents of one-third of villages in Akkar believe assistance is uneven, while almost 50 per cent believe that there are both geographic and coordination gaps.²⁵⁸ Only 96 village representatives in Akkar reported humanitarian agencies working in the district. Of them, 82 said that Syrians were the main beneficiaries, while 37 villages reported that the main beneficiaries were Lebanese. Only 23 villages reported that both Syrians and Lebanese were beneficiaries of aid.²⁵⁹ There is also widespread belief that many of the refugees receiving aid have been working as seasonal workers in Lebanon for many years. An aid worker confirmed to World Vision that aid has been delivered to former Syrian seasonal workers in Lebanon now considered refugees but it is unclear how widespread this practice is.²⁶⁰ Stakeholder analysis qualifies the suggested negative attitudes of host communities towards refugee populations, insofar as it emphasizes the uneven distribution of aid across Akkar and Tripoli + T5. Although, for example, the level of humanitarian food assistance delivered to host communities in Akkar was amongst the highest in the country, still a disproportionate amount of the overall region wide distributions went to Syrian refugees. Equally, analysis revealed that intervention across other sectors primarily targeted refugee populations, and when host communities were included in the interventions, attention was markedly uneven.

In some areas, Islamic charities are providing aid to refugees and Lebanese alike. There is widespread concern within the international community that these charities are using their funds not only to provide material assistance but to proselytise and encourage certain ideologies, particularly amongst Syrian and Lebanese Sunni youth.²⁶¹ However, stakeholder analysis revealed that because Islamic charities are not partnered with or regulated by the GoL or UNHCR, they often have the unique ability to operate in areas inaccessible to other organisations because of security reasons. As such, it is reported that Islamic charities have gained the trust of Syrian fighters, army defectors, and other refugees unwilling to register or provide information to official institutions.²⁶² Many Islamic organisations, however, lack the technical capacity and experience to fulfil the needs of many refugees and have requested assistance from UNHCR and partner organizations working in the same area. UNHCR at present cannot work with them, given their unofficial status, unreliability of their funding sources, and significantly different intervention standards.

According to Mercy Corps, in Akkar and Tripoli, where state authority is weak and refugees sometimes outnumber locals, the propensity to use violence as a means of achieving political or social change is higher than anywhere else in the country.²⁶³ In effect, resorting to violence has been more common in the North than elsewhere: clashes in Tripoli between Sunnis and Alawites were common until late April, when LAF implemented a new security plan that has somewhat restored order. In Akkar, a group of residents in Qobayat threw rocks at new refugees and in Wadi Khaled, a municipal building hosting refugee families was attacked in January 2014.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ World Vision, *Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon* (2013).

²⁵⁸ REACH, *Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate* (2014)

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ World Vision, *Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon* (2013).

²⁶¹ International Crisis Group, *Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon* (2013).

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Mercy Corps, *Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon* (2013).

²⁶⁴ "UN: To Avoid Tensions with refugees, Lebanese Hosts Need Support," *IRIN*, 28 June 2013.

These events are in line with the opinions gathered by FAFO: over 50 per cent of Lebanese in the North feel that they cannot rely on the central government to protect the population, while 80 per cent think refugees pose a security threat, well over the national average of 52 per cent.²⁶⁵ In areas where refugees outnumber local Lebanese residents, host community members fear sectarian strife: 59 per cent of respondents admitted that they fear that the crisis will spark a sectarian conflict and 78 per cent think the conflict will evolve into a new civil war.

In Akkar, findings from a forthcoming REACH/UNHCR report suggest that curfews, identification controls and night patrols are commonplace and instilling fear among Syrians. Nonetheless, tensions were reported by only six per cent of the 195 representatives of villages hosting refugees: seven reported tension spurred by cultural differences; seven due to competition for livelihoods; four because of security reasons; and one due to the strain on infrastructure. However, the representatives may have underreported tensions and regulations given their role as mediators between groups. In effect, in almost all of the villages where REACH focus group discussions and IRC monitoring reports indicated that regulations existed, representatives suggested otherwise.²⁶⁶

According to the same study, Syrians believed community tensions to be linked to attitudes of the Syrian regime. Some Lebanese have bad memories of the Syrian occupation and thus show disdain towards refugees. In villages where Lebanese expressed acceptance of refugees, however, the latter were less likely to report complaints. Most Lebanese participants of REACH's focus group discussions believe that dispute resolution methods were adequate; however, only nine villages out of the 33 that had formal dispute resolution forums have invited Syrians to participate in them.

4.2.3 BEKAA

According to FAFO, 77 per cent of people in Bekaa fear the conflict is going to spark a new civil war. This tension is the result of the high concentration of refugees and the strain on public services and the economy, which has affected low-income workers the most. In addition, state authority in Bekaa is relatively weak. This power vacuum has left leeway for people to use of violence as a means to achieve their objectives.²⁶⁷

There appears to be some host community resentment against the Lebanese government for allowing refugees into the country. There is also resentment against the refugees for 'profiting' off the assistance they receive.²⁶⁸ In Aarsal and Qaa, for example, residents complained when they discovered that the government and civil society organisations had been distributing aid to refugees.²⁶⁹ Many Lebanese residents reported that a majority of the Syrians receiving aid had been working as seasonal workers in Lebanon for many years, and therefore should not be considered refugees. In addition, many Syrian refugees, due to poor coordination among NGOs, have been receiving duplicate aid items and sell excess items for profit.²⁷⁰

The stakeholder analysis conducted by REACH reiterates the issue of problematic co-ordination between aid organisations, such that estimations suggest that nine organizations distributed food to the equivalent of over 900 thousand beneficiaries.²⁷¹ The figure is, however, not reflective of the actual number of people who received food, since the risks of beneficiaries being double counted or receiving double donations are high. In comparison, only 16 Lebanese host community members received food items in Bekaa, which once more underscores the disparity in levels of aid distributions.

²⁶⁵ FAFO, High Lebanese Fear of New Civil War; Ambivalent Attitudes Towards Syrian Refugees (2013).

²⁶⁶ REACH, Lebanese Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, Akkar Governorate (2014)

²⁶⁷ Mercy Corps, Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon (2013).

²⁶⁸ Case study included in World Vision International report

²⁶⁹ United Nations Development Programme and Consultation & Research Institute, The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and Development Planning (forthcoming).

²⁷⁰ World Vision, Under Pressure: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Host Communities in Lebanon (2013).

²⁷¹ Double counting

Given inadequate government service provision and support for host communities, Hezbollah has been providing assistance to both Christian and Muslim local populations. In fact, Hezbollah is gaining further political support and diverting the preference of Christians away from the Syrian refugees.²⁷² Christians have expressed fear of the growing influx of Sunni Syrians, which can tilt the religious balance in the country. At the local level, Christians view Syrian refugees as a security threat since clashes between pro-Hezbollah Shias from Labweh and Sunni Lebanese and Syrians from Aarsal have escalated.²⁷³

In the majority Christian town of Jdeideh-Fakehe, fear of the advance of Syrian Sunni fighters, generally referred to as the 'Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant', has resulted in resentment towards the government and aid organisations.

However, Hezbollah is providing basic needs, such as petrol and food, to both the poor and less vulnerable populations in the area. Because of this, some Christians in Jdeidah tend to support Hezbollah and admit that they would prefer the victory of the Syrian regime than that of the Syrian rebels.²⁷⁴

According to Mercy Corps, due to the Syrians' desire to keep a low profile, no natural leaders have emerged in refugee communities and support networks are weak. However, other sources suggest that natural leaders have not emerged in urban areas because Syrians are more scattered but leaders have emerged in informal settlements.²⁷⁵ The role of these leaders is primarily to work as mediators between aid organisations and the camp residents although they also mediate conflicts between settlers and between camp residents and host community representatives.²⁷⁶

4.2.4 SOUTH

The South was severely affected during the 2006 war with Israel and the influence of the central government there is weak. However, municipalities tend to be stronger than elsewhere and both the private sector and political parties, particularly Hezbollah and Amal, play an important role in the provision of services and the upgrading of infrastructure. Respondents in the South and Nabatiyeh, where the number of refugees is relatively low compared to other regions, are less prone to resort to violence and have greater trust of government institutions' capacity to deal with the refugee crisis.²⁷⁷

According to FAFO, trust in the LAF is particularly high in Nabatiyeh (92 per cent) in comparison with the rest of the country (80 per cent).²⁷⁸ In addition, poll respondents expressed greater willingness to have Syrian neighbours (71 per cent) than anywhere else in the country. This corresponds with the findings of the 2013 Mercy Corps study, which states that in areas where trust in the government and feelings of security are higher, host communities are less likely to see Syrians as a security threat or to resort to violence.²⁷⁹

However, curfews established in Nabatiyeh and Jezzine suggest that local attitudes are changing regarding the presence of refugees. It is also possible that the political inclinations of municipal officials are encouraging restrictive measures to play up the threat posed by refugees and respond with more radical measures.²⁸⁰

²⁷² Stephanie d'Arc Taylor, Op.Cit.

²⁷³ Lebanese Center for Studies & Research, Beirut Research & Innovation Center, and OXFAM, Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

²⁷⁴ Stephanie d'Arc Taylor, Op. Cit.

²⁷⁵ These natural leaders differ from informal settlement managers known as shawish. The shawish – some Syrian, some Lebanese – manage informal tented settlements in agricultural lands and charge fees for the occupation of plots. They also connect refugees with sources of employment and take a percentage of the workers' pay. They originally worked with Syrian seasonal workers and have now seen their business boom with the influx of refugees. According to: International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM, and UKaid, Lebanon Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA): Executive Briefing for Analyses in the Construction, Service Sector and Agricultural Labor Systems (2013); Interview with Jean Baptiste Prequel, Doctoral Fellow at Intitute Francais du Proche-Orient (Ifpo), Beirut, 8 May 2014.

²⁷⁶ Interview with Jean Baptiste Prequel, Doctoral Fellow at Intitute Francais du Proche-Orient (Ifpo), Beirut, 8 May 2014.

²⁷⁷ Mercy Corps, Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon (2013).

²⁷⁸ FAFO, High Lebanese Fear of New Civil War; Ambivalent Attitudes Towards Syrian Refugees (2013).

²⁷⁹ Mercy Corps, Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon (2013).

²⁸⁰ ALEF – Act for Human Rights, Two Years On: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (2013).

It is important to note that refugee communities settling in the South are culturally distinct to both most of Syria and to the southern Lebanese residents. While in the North, locals share greater cultural ties with Syria and are accustomed to cross-border interactions with Syrians, in the South, people associate Syrians either with seasonal work or the Syrian occupation.²⁸¹

The situation in the rural South seems to be different from the main urban centres, Sidon and Tyre. In Sidon, clashes broke out in 2013 between LAF and Salafi militants lead by Sheikh Ahmed al-Assir. The clashes led to the retreat of al-Assir's group, which had risen in prominence in Sidon by advocating strongly in favour of the rebels in Syria. Tyre, one of Hezbollah's strongholds, has not seen conflicts erupt between locals and Syrian Sunnis but the arrival of increasing numbers of refugees is posing threats to the city's stability. Conflict has been contained most likely because of Hezbollah's interest in undermining the effects of the Syria crisis in Lebanon, which prompts the organisation to take a more active role in managing the negative consequences of the refugee influx.²⁸²

CONCLUSION

This report provided a secondary data review of the information available on the social, economic and political impact of the refugee influx on Lebanese host communities as well as the principal vectors of tension within communities in the context of the Syria crisis. It included data drawn from a stakeholder analysis conducted in June 2014 by REACH, which served to shed further light on the interventions conducted by the humanitarian community in Lebanon, and how they are impacting upon vulnerability levels in host communities and social cohesion between refugee and host. The report's overall purpose was to inform the assessment tools of the REACH/OCHA study that seeks to identify vulnerabilities and factors that undermine resilience and social cohesion at the community level.

The influx of refugees is affecting the capacity of host communities to secure their livelihoods, access public services and ensure safety. These socioeconomic factors are threatening social cohesion within Lebanese host communities, both within the community and between locals and displaced populations. Tensions are particularly high in Tripoli, Akkar and Bekaa, where the demographic and economic pressure of the refugee influx has exacerbated pre-Crisis vulnerabilities in areas historically neglected by the government. In addition, cross-border clashes and sectarian fighting are putting local residents and refugees in the middle and summoning memories of the Lebanese Civil War.

Competition for livelihoods and access to services is also creating more resentment in communities where the government is largely absent. In addition, another source of tension includes perceptions of inadequate or uneven support to host communities, who are particularly under-served by food and NFI distributions, and largely do not appear to make up figures included in health care assistance interventions. At the same time, however, certain communities that have not been severely affected by the influx of refugees, in some cases, hold strong negative opinions of newcomers prompted by sectarian and security concerns.

Vulnerability has traditionally been associated with poverty at the household level, as reflected in the UNICEF ranking tool currently used to inform humanitarian response programming in Lebanon. Findings suggest, however, that the degree of vulnerability of a community depends not only on levels of poverty but largely on their capacity to cope with sudden changes. In fact, communities which are better able to adapt to their new or difficult living conditions and can

²⁸¹ Interview with Emily Jacquard, Country Director at Search For Common Ground, Beirut, May 2014.

²⁸² International Crisis Group, *Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon* (2013).

rely on either local government or other actors for support are better able to address vectors of tension and channel disputes regardless of their level of poverty.

These findings suggest that the vulnerability of host communities should be assessed not just by considering their material deprivations but the institutional networks that allow people to come together, assess cross-cutting issues and secure the funding and capacity needed to respond to them. The long-standing vulnerabilities of host communities should then be addressed through a resilience-based humanitarian and development approach that takes into account demographic changes, access to basic services as well as factors affecting social cohesion. Programs should ensure long-term and sustainable solutions to the crisis by creating inter-group networks that are inclusive without exacerbating sectarian differences so as to avoid the outbreak of violence and ensure the resilience of all members of the community.

The findings in this report demonstrate that **it is imperative to not just provide assistance to refugees, but also address the needs of host communities and strengthen their resilience to safeguard against any potential spillovers of the conflict in Syria.** In order to design an effective and holistic response, however, it is fundamental to review what constitutes vulnerability in Lebanon in the context of the refugee crisis.

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About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH was created in 2010 to facilitate the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information about REACH and to access our information products, please visit: www.reach-initiative.org. You can also write to our in-country team at: lebanon@reach-initiative.org and to the REACH global team at: geneva@reach-initiative.org. Follow us @REACH_info