COMMUNITY CENTERS - 2024 END OF YEAR REPORT

In 2024, UNHCR supported 31 community centers, including 20 Community Development Centers (CDCs) and 11 Social Development Centers (SDCs), across Lebanon. Through community centers, women, men, boys and girls of diverse backgrounds can access protection, social, legal, learning, and other services and activities. Over the past year, centers played a key role in empowering communities, building their capacities, and supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs). This report analyzes data and measures the impact of community center activities from January to December 2024.

CDC Participation at a Glance

102,956
persons participated in activities at community centers (over 340,000 instances of participation[1])

66%
of participants are women and girls

Figure 1. IDP children participate in a psychosocial support (PSS) activity at one of the collective shelters in Beirut, Mount Lebanon.

Regular activities

89,562
persons participated in activities at community centers (close to 300,000 instances of participation)

67%
of participants are women and girls

85% Syrians | **13%** Lebanese | **2%** Other nationalities[2]

19% Children[3] | **18%** Youth | **59%** Adults | **3%** Older persons

Modality of implementation
74% at the center | **22%** through outreach | **4%** online

Emergency response activities

13,394[4]
persons participated in activities at collective shelters, within communities, online or at community centers (40,181 instances of participation)

55%
of participants are women and girls

89% Lebanese | **13%** Refugees

44% Children | **6%** Older persons

Modality of implementation
76% at collective shelters | **7%** at NGO space | **7%** at household level (apartment/house) | **4%** at informal settlements
3% at municipality or other public spaces

Solidarity in action: Community-led initiatives in times of crisis
Amid the war on Lebanon, community centers partners supported community-led initiatives, highlighting acts of **solidarity between refugee and Lebanese communities.** In the South, SHIELD supported Lebanese and Syrians to establish community kitchens, provide meals for Lebanese IDPs, and train youth in food production. In BML, skilled **Lebanese and Syrian women** from Amel's community groups produced and distributed **beddings and pillow sheets** for IDPs in Chiyah, highlighting the power of collaboration. Additionally, in the Bekaa, a **Syrian refugee trained in crochet** with Caritas crafted Christmas ornaments, with proceeds supporting IDP families through **Made51's Geneva market linkages.** Such initiatives reflect the **resilience, cooperation, and solidarity that connects** refugee and host communities in times of crisis.

"You brought me back to my home in the village. I have a beautiful garden, and this activity made me feel like I was there again."

Displaced Lebanese woman participating in an agriculture activity at a collective shelter in the South

[1] *Refers to the multiple participation of community members in community centers activities, whether online or in-person.*
[2] *Iraqi, Palestinian, Sudanese, Stateless*
[3] *Below 18 years of age*
[4] *Due to multiple challenges in collecting biodata from IDPs, especially those residing in collective shelters, partners reported on aggregate figures on participation in activities. The unique number of persons was estimated through dividing the number of instances by 3.*

How do Community Centers Protect Refugees?

Community centers in Lebanon apply a holistic **"one-stop-shop" approach,** limiting scattered services that may incur a transportation burden on refugees and increase their exposure to safety and security risks. Through online or mobile activities, centers facilitate access to persons with limited mobility or those in remote locations, which also enhances participation of persons with specific needs. Centers also support refugee and Lebanese communities in understanding their rights, thus reducing gender inequalities, discrimination, and barriers to access. The below figures from 2024 highlight the protection impact of community centers.

Access to Information

36,689
persons accessed
info desks
at community centers for updated information, protection referrals, and inquiries about services and activities

24,410
persons participated in
awareness sessions
on various topics, such as available services, GBV prevention, and internet safety

Learning and Skills Development

5,564
persons participated in
skills training
including artisans, photography, coding and electronics maintenance

2,894
persons participated in
learning activities
through classes covering basic literacy and numeracy, digital or language skills

Psychosocial Support (PSS), Case Management and Specialized Services

9,059
persons received
MHPSS services
through diverse structured curricula

3,226
persons participated in
life skills sessions
on coping with stress, positive parenting and employability

7,190
persons at heightened risk received
case management
and general or legal counselling services

Psychosocial Support (PSS), Case Management and Specialized Services

1,440
persons engaged in
189 community groups
comprised of women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and children with 76% participation of women and girls

2,238
persons participated in
60 community initiatives
that addressed key protection issues faced by refugees and Lebanese

Accessible Registration Services

31,517
persons (46% women, 14% youth and 6% older persons) used
Khadamaty
to access UNHCR reception center services such as basic assistance card verification (75%), appointments (13%) and housing attestations (7%)

Figure 2. Children paint a mural on one of the walls of a collective shelter in Hasbaya.

Figure 3. A Syrian refugee, previously trained in barbering at the Arsal community center, gives free haircuts to displaced Lebanese children and adults in one of the Bekaa collective shelters.

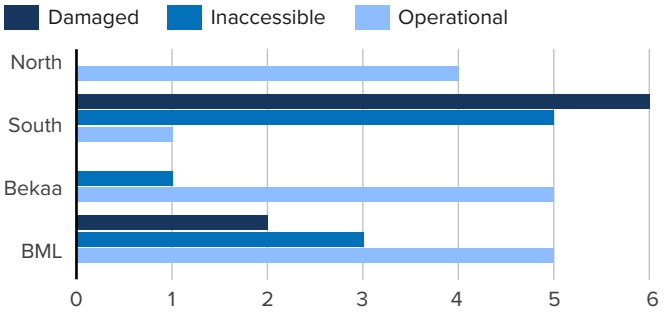
Healing through Support: The Impact of PSS Sessions

During the emergency, psychosocial support (PSS) sessions became a beacon of hope and resilience, helping both refugee and Lebanese cope with distressing events. Through drawing, painting, and creative activities, children who were withdrawn and fearful found a safe space to express their emotions. In the South, one mother shared, "Before this activity, my daughter was anxious and had nightmares. Now, she looks forward to the sessions and talks about her feelings more openly."*The impact extended to adults as well. In the North, caregivers found comfort and strength through these sessions. Bara'a, a Syrian woman caring for her elderly mother, reflected, "I felt like I was drowning and constantly stressed. These sessions gave me tools to manage my emotions. Through support of other women who share my experiences, I now feel stronger and more capable, both as a caregiver and as a person."*

Emergency Response

In 2024, Lebanon faced heavy bombardment in most locations resulting in the internal displacement of over one million persons and wide disruption of services. Nonetheless, **17 out of 31 community centers** remained operational and provided refugees and IDPs essential support such as vital information and emergency psychosocial support. Even in inaccessible locations, centers expanded their outreach by delivering protection activities to displaced persons in collective shelters, public spaces, and households. In specific, community centers provided **psychosocial support to 11,000 individuals** and delivered **critical information and awareness sessions to 8,600 people** across **285 collective shelters.** Community center partners also established safe spaces and information points within shelters and mobilized **158 community focal points** to assist in site management and contribute to enhancing their situation.

Impact of the emergency on community centers



Participant Feedback and Satisfaction Survey

Community centers collected the below information through an anonymous online survey administered at the end of each activity to assess the quality of services provided at the centers, as well as receive participants' feedback on their level of satisfaction, suggestions, and general activity outcomes.

18,527 center participants

- **80%** female
- **18%** children
- **23%** youth

which comprise 21% of all CDC participants, provided feedback on activities they attended from January to December 2024.

Activity outcomes

97% benefitted from new information

78% gained new skills

71% agree that the things they learned in the session will benefit them in their daily lives

Psychosocial outcomes

73% feel happier and less stressed[5]

62% increased their self-confidence through participation in activities

Connectedness

45% increased connections and built new friend-ships/relationships

Feedback and complaints

98% know how to report complaints and provide feedback on CDC-related issues

Satisfaction

79% noted that facilitators had good knowledge of the topics

Negative feedback

The most mentioned challenge (5%) is the **short duration** of the skills sessions

[5] *Most impactful activities include awareness sessions (35%), skills trainings (17%) and life skills activities (17%).*

Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

The findings presented below are collected through the social and economic impact assessment survey which evaluates impact of skills trainings, through comparing inputs before (baseline) and three-months after the training (end-line). It also highlights challenges, good practices, and recommendations for skills training sessions and increases refugee participation in the monitoring and evaluation process within the programme cycle.

	Baseline from Q3 2023 until Q2 2024	End-line from Q1 until Q4 2024
Number of participants	3,802 / 90% females	2,776 / 87% females
Nationality	68% Syrians, 29% Lebanese, 3% Other	72% Syrians, 24% Lebanese, 4% Other
Youth	28%	27%
Disability	5%	2%

Economic impact[6]

- The percentage of participants who noted being engaged in an income-generating activity three months after completion of the training doubled between the baseline (10%) and endline (20%)
- 89% of those who reported being engaged in an income-generating activity mentioned that the training helped them secure this income
- Top trainings include: artisan (28%), barber (12%), and photography (4%)

↔ 48% were able to purchase more food

↑ 36% were able to repay debt

↑ 35% were able to cover rent

↔ 29% were able to purchase more household items

Social impact

Expectations (baseline survey)		Outcomes (endline survey)	
62%	Greater access to information	71%	↑
59%	Feelings of increased self-confidence	60%	↔
65%	Establish new friendships	74%	↑
43%	Feelings of increased safety and security	41%	↓

Barriers identified by persons who were unable to secure an income or a job include:

- Scarcity in jobs related to the training topic: 24%
- Personal or family-related reasons: 15%
- Inability to afford starter kits/material: 5%

Empowering Refugees through Skills & Opportunity: Bashir's Success Story

Over the past year, skills trainings at the community centers supported thousands of refugees, Lebanese and internally displaced to unlock their potential, gain self-reliance, and build a better future for themselves and their families. As an empowerment activity, the trainings address protection risks by building skills and social networks that benefit the most vulnerable. One of many inspiring success stories is that of Bashir, a young refugee in Bekaa who turned his passion for photography into a thriving business. Through the photography training at Baalbeck CDC, Bashir mastered essential techniques and gained the confidence to take his passion beyond the classroom. Upon completing the program, Bashir launched his own professional photography business, offering photoshoot services across the Bekaa. He became known for his exceptional work, capturing moments with depth and emotion. Bashir's business grew, and he is now a recognized professional in the community.

[6] *Data highlights an increase ↑, decrease ↓, or comparability ↔ vis a vis 2023 figures.*

"Crocheting is more than just a hobby or a craft; it is a relaxing journey that nourishes our hearts and minds. There is something truly magical about the rhythmic movement of the hook and yarn as each stitch transforms into a work of art, from the soothing repetition to the satisfaction of creating something beautiful with your own hands. Crochet has a way of bringing joy and tranquility into our lives, whether you are a beginner or a professional."

Syrian woman, participant in crochet skills training, South Lebanon

Figure 4. "I never expected that in such a short time I could acquire a skill and open my own business! I am so grateful to have participated in such a course". Mona, a stateless woman, participant in a soap-making skills training, North Lebanon.

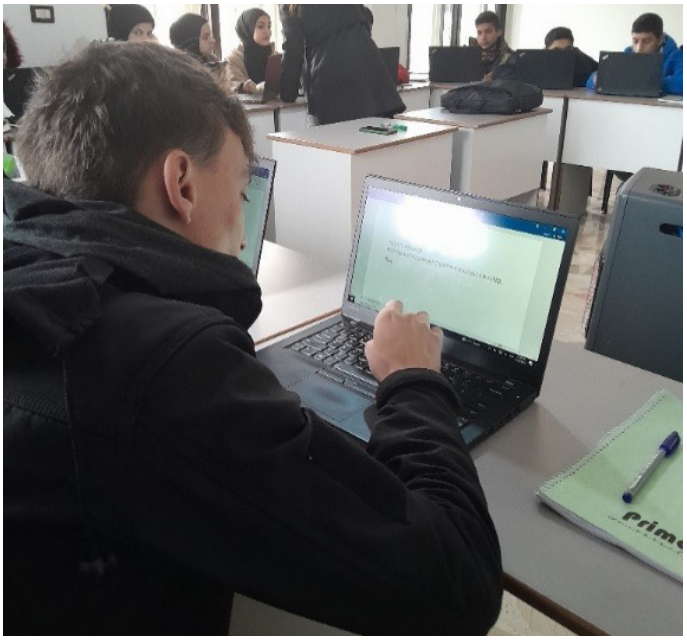


Figure 5. "I always felt like my disability is a hindrance, but not anymore. I can learn and have fun." Male youth with disability, participant in digital skills training, North Lebanon.

Priority areas for 2025

- Continue to ensure cost-efficiency and effectiveness of community centers for sustainable programming and protection impact
- Consolidate activities at community centers for a holistic one-stop-shop approach
- Facilitate the implementation of key protection activities, such as those linked to case management, return, registration and basic assistance card validation
- Enhance child protection at community centers and mainstream gender-based violence risk mitigation, as well as promote inclusive programming
- Strengthen community initiatives that empower refugees and Lebanese to address protection risks and support the most vulnerable, as part of promoting self-help
- Implement structured and evidence-based MHPSS curricula
- Strengthen collaboration with UN agencies for complementary services, including livelihoods and peace-building initiatives

Community centre partner organizations

UNHCR extends its appreciation for the tremendous efforts and dedication of community center implementing project partners and UNHCR community-based protection field focal points who have contributed to the centers' continuous support and trust with the community.

Amel | Caritas (and its umbrella partners Al Hadatha and Al Ribat Associations) | INTERSOS (and its umbrella partner Nabad) | IRC Makhzoumi Foundation | SHEILD

Financial information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to community centres, and those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds in 2024.

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