

UNHCR Monthly Update

Protection - Community Development

December 2013

Key figures

858,641	individuals registered or pending registration
78%	women and children
36%	persons with specific needs
24%	children at risk

December developments

Community mobilization

- 3 additional refugees outreach volunteers were mobilized. The network of 116 volunteers reinforces linkages and trust with communities through two-way communication. They also alert UNHCR to protection and assistance gaps.
- Results of participatory assessments (consultations) with over 1,000 refugees were incorporated into UNHCR's 2014 planning processes.

Livelihoods and self-reliance

- 1,200 persons, 40% Lebanese and mostly women, engaged in vocational and life-skill activities through community centers.
- 2 livelihood centers were established in the Bekaa and Tripoli offering job matching, targeted trainings and referrals to micro-finance.
- 52 persons, 40% Lebanese, accessed group lending (micro-credit) services.

Social cohesion and conflict mitigation activities

- 60 young basketball coaches were trained nationwide and 1,080 children from both local host and refugee communities engaged in positive communication through play.
- Conflict baseline (900 surveys, 36 focus groups and 45 interviews) concluded in the north and south to prepare for roundtable discussions and formation of local conflict resolution mechanisms in 11 at-risk communities.

Specific needs case management

- Case management committees (multi-functional teams) were established in all field offices to resolve complex protection cases.
- 1,860 persons received emergency cash assistance in December; over 9,760 have received assistance this year.

Achievements: January – December

Activity	 reached January - December	 2013 Target
Specific needs cases referred	27,739	9,000
Vocational training	4,069	3,500
Conflict resolution trainings	375	100
Refugee outreach volunteers	116	200
Community centres established	26	37



Refugee outreach volunteer meeting in Tyre @ UNHCR/ R.Kevorkian

Needs

According to the 2013 UN Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees (VASyR), 72% of refugees are unable to meet their basic needs. During assessments conducted in 2013, refugees expressed a need to receive outreach and support in accessing scarce resources, in particular overstretched social services and job opportunities. Newly disabled refugees expressed difficulty in adjusting to their situation, in providing for their families, and being accepted by their communities. Older persons and female-headed households sought information about how to access available health services, and meet their health care needs. Given the widespread dispersal of refugees throughout Lebanon, information dissemination, outreach and referral for available services is critical. Scarcity of resources and competition has caused violence and tension to escalate between refugee and local communities, requiring additional attention to conflict reduction and host community support.

Challenges

Dispersed refugee population: Refugees now make up over one fifth of Lebanon's population. With the widespread dispersal of refugees in over 1,600 locations throughout Lebanon, there is a need to build upon existing outreach and support initiatives to prevent and respond to the immense scale of protection risks.

Overstretched social services and limited job opportunities: With the escalating number of refugees in Lebanon, public services have become overstretched, job opportunities have diminished, and the prices of basic goods have risen sharply due to inflation. Increasingly, refugees are adopting negative coping mechanisms to survive. National health, legal and social systems need additional support to expand services, especially for the specific needs of women and children.

Increasing tensions: Pressure on services and increasing economic competition threaten the wellbeing of both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. Diminishing salaries and opportunities linked to an increasing workforce have brought about tensions and restrictive government policies regarding livelihoods programmes for Syrians. The impositions of curfews in a growing number of local villages and a recent spate of evictions of refugees from informal settlements are testament to rising tensions.

Strategy

To effectively address vulnerabilities and safeguard protection space for refugees, UNHCR's strategic priorities are:

- to assist refugees in accessing basic services;
- strengthen outreach with refugees and host communities;
- empower and promote self-management in communities;
- increase livelihood opportunities, as well as promote social cohesion among Lebanese and Syrians through dialogue and community support projects.

UNHCR implementing partners

Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CMLC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Amel Association-Lebanese Popular Association for Popular Action (AMEL), Makhzoumi Foundation, Restart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, Social, Right to Play, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention For Local Development (SHEILD), Search for Common Ground, International Alert, UNDP, Al Majmoua, Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA).