




HIGHLIGHTS

- Beirut's hackathon brings together over 100 diverse actors to improve humanitarian action through innovation.
- Number of Lebanese children working increases threefold; three out of four child labourers in Lebanon are Syrians.
- New UNRWA policy to cover 90 per cent of secondary healthcare costs; 100 per cent in Palestine Red Crescent hospitals; and 60 per cent of tertiary health services.
- USD\$ 807 million allocated to UN and partners in Lebanon.

FIGURES

(as of 31 March 2016)

# of refugees	1,048,275
52.5 %  47.5 %  53 % 	
# of returnees	35,000
# of Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS)	40,807
# of Palestine Refugees from Lebanon (PRL)	277,985
# of targeted host communities	1,500,000
Total Lebanese population	4.4 M

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Beirut Hackathon: innovating the response

Tech actors gather to address Lebanon's humanitarian challenges

From 3-5 June, OCHA-Lebanon co-hosted a 48-hour-hackathon event in an attempt to find innovative solutions to humanitarian problems in Lebanon. The event, entitled **Innovating Response**, was led by the [Open Source Action Network](#), a private network of tech actors, and included the support of OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and several established private



Beirut Hackathon poster

sector tech actors in Lebanon including Torch, Wamda, and AltCity.

The UN proposed nine humanitarian challenges to participants, ranging from how to improve vaccinations campaigns among vulnerable groups to how to strengthen two-way communications with affected populations. In response, 12 technologies (i.e. applications, websites and devices) were proposed as solutions by as many teams within the 48-hour-deadline. The winning technologies of the event were Kwik Response, an early warning system that monitors hazards including fires and high or low temperatures in shelters to alert responders; and Silah, an on-line platform that connects refugees to one another to barter goods and services. To date, five of the technologies developed at the hackathon are being further developed by partners.

Over 100 people participated in the event including Lebanese hackers, hackers from the global community who participated remotely, and experts from the humanitarian and tech side who presented the challenges. Arab Women in Computing ([ArabWic](#)) supported the event, ensuring 30 per cent female hacker participation. The event showcased the talents of Lebanon's youth and their potential to address the myriad challenges their country faces in modern and innovative ways. National and international media were in attendance, including the Wall Street Journal that produced a short [video](#) about the event.

Be part of the conversation

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Lebanese, Syrian child labour on the rise

Economic hardship exacerbates child labour problem

The deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Lebanon has further exacerbated the problem of child labour among both refugees and host communities. Recent reports highlight that children are increasingly becoming the breadwinners of vulnerable families, working long hours for low wages, often in hazardous and exploitative conditions.



Refugee children working in agriculture. Source: Tabitha Ross/ILO

According to [UNICEF](#), from 2009 to 2016, there has been a threefold increase in the number of Lebanese child labourers. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) reports that in 2015, some 10,000 Lebanese students dropped out of school. Three out of every four child labourers in Lebanon are Syrians, mainly working in agriculture. The International Labour Organization (ILO) [confirms](#) this finding, indicating that the number of working children has increased exponentially since the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis, with families increasingly relying on their children to contribute to the household income. Mobility restrictions due to fear from being arrested at checkpoints for illegal stay are also a factor pushing some families to send children to work; declining household incomes are another factor.

Caregivers do not report exploitation of children working in agriculture for fear of reprisals including eviction.

Six years into the protracted refugee crisis, caregivers are adopting negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and early marriage, as highlighted by recent assessments conducted by child protection partners. Lack of access to economic opportunities for caregivers coupled with a high number of out-of-school children has resulted in families regarding child labour as a viable source of income for the family. Caregivers do not systematically report the exploitation of children fearing reprisal (including eviction), however, partners nevertheless continue to independently document instances of such abuses.

Child labour has an adverse impact on education. MEHE partly attributes dropout rates of Syrian refugees from the second shift to children being forced to work, in addition to the lack of affordable school transportation in the more rural areas. Four months after the start of the second classroom shift, 45,000 Syrian students dropped out. MEHE also notes a correlation between the agricultural picking season and school attendance whereby some 2,000 to 3,000 students are absent from school during harvest. ILO adds that child labour in agriculture is no longer exclusively seasonal since picking seasons depend on the produce harvested.

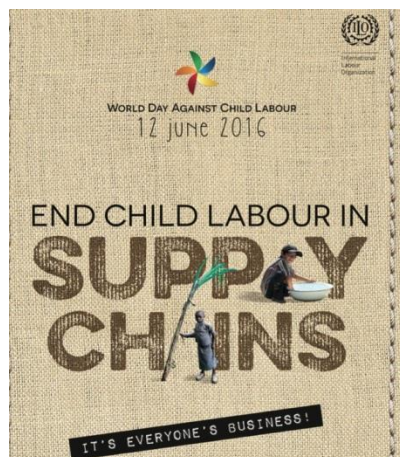
What is Child Labour?

The term 'child labour' is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. Whether or not particular forms of 'work' can be called 'child labour' depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.

In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illness and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities.

Addressing child labour in agriculture

A [panel discussion](#) organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for “[World Day against Child Labour \(12 June\)](#)” emphasized the



need for urgent collective action to stop hazardous types of child labour, seen largely among Syrian refugees. UNICEF stressed that attitudes and practices need to change in Lebanon to end child labour. Such attitudes include relying on young children as household bread winners and accepting child labour as a socially acceptable practice rather than encouraging education.

According to FAO, ending child labour in agriculture requires social protection and decent work policies for rural youth and adults. The organization is thus intensifying efforts to ensure social protection through programs designed to reduce and strengthen labour markets. Moreover, ILO and FAO are raising

awareness on the importance of child labour issues by reaching out to agricultural professionals.

The Government of Lebanon, particularly the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs and Agriculture, is aiming to adopt measures that protect children from abuse including the worst forms of child labour. The Government is working on raising awareness in rural areas about hazardous work that endanger children's future and the Ministry of Labour and the National Committee to Combat Child Labour are articulating policies and actions to protect children from the worst forms of child labour and implementing projects to encourage minimal school dropout. In partnership with the Government, FAO, ILO and UNICEF have started interventions to child labour in agriculture since 2015.

[World Day against Child Labour](#)

ILO launched the World Day against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the actions needed to eliminate it. Every year on 12 June, the World Day brings together governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world to highlight the plight of child labourers and what can be done to help them.

This year, the focus was on child labour and supply chains. With **168 million children still in child labour**, all supply chains, from agriculture to manufacturing, services to construction, run the risk that child labour may be present.

Protection sector steps up to protect juveniles in Lebanon

In partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and UNICEF, the Child Protection sector has recently adopted the “[National Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon](#)”. This tool aims to advance the protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. The SOPs include standardized assessments, evaluation protocols, case management methodologies and trainings. Moreover, the SOPs further guide relevant ministries on monitoring and implementing juvenile protection laws. The child protection measures intend to improve the analysis of child protection issues in Lebanon and to boost the quality of case management processes and services. The absence of this tool has for many years impeded fulfilling the basic rights of children and ensuring their protection based on a standardized legal framework. This SOPs follow from findings reported from a joint study, “Strengthening Child Protection System in Lebanon: Challenges and Opportunities”, conducted by the MoSA-Higher Council for Childhood and UNICEF in coordination with the Lebanese School for Social Work-University of Saint Joseph and Child Frontiers.

Ending child labour in agriculture requires social protection and decent work policies for rural youth and adults.

Humanitarian Updates

Suicide bombing attacks in Qaa leave 5 dead, 28 injured

Two suicide bombing attacks conducted by eight suicide bombers occurred in the north-eastern border village of Qaa (Baalbeck-Hermel Governorate) on 27 June killing five and injuring 28. Governorate-wide curfews were in place from the day of the attacks through 4 July. Nearly 10,000 registered Syrian refugees reside in Qaa Area, the majority residing in the 191 Informal Settlements across the area. There were no reports of displaced persons following the bombings; the one primary health center (PHC) in Qaa village was damaged during the bombings with cases thereafter referred to a PHC in neighboring Hermel. At least of eight international organizations operating across the four cadasters in Qaa suspended operations due to the security situation; as of 7 July, those partners have not yet resumed activities. National NGOs, including the Lebanese Red Cross remained operational throughout the period.

Twin bombings in Qaa disrupt humanitarian assistance.

UNRWA announces revised health policy

Following months of negotiations with the Palestine refugee leadership, UNRWA announced on 1 June its adjusted Health Policy. UNRWA will cover 90 per cent of Palestine refugees' secondary healthcare costs in government hospitals; 90 per cent in private hospitals; and 100 per cent in Palestine Red Crescent hospitals. The adjusted policy also includes an increased 60 per cent coverage for tertiary health services (such as cancer treatment and cardiac surgery) with a ceiling of USD\$5,000. UNRWA's Medical Hardship Fund will also subsidize the secondary care payment for extremely poor families. Prior to the reform, UNRWA covered 100 per cent of all secondary healthcare for Palestine refugees in all available medical facilities, and 50 per cent of tertiary healthcare with a ceiling of \$4,200 per intervention. However, the agency - which currently faces a budget shortfall of almost \$80 million across the region as well as an increasing demand for services - has been forced to make cuts in order to achieve greater sustainability for its operations.

90 per cent of Palestine Refugees from Syria live in poverty.

UNRWA-AUB survey on the socio-economic status of Palestine refugees

A new report published jointly by UNRWA and the American University of Beirut updates a 2010 report on the conditions of Palestinians in Lebanon. It provides an authoritative overview of the vulnerabilities and socio-economic challenges of Palestinians across Lebanon, including those who have fled Syria. Key findings of the report show that 65 per cent of the Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL) still live below the poverty line, the same proportion as in 2010. Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) face substantially worse poverty levels than PRL with 90 per cent of PRS living in poverty and constituting one of the most vulnerable groups in the region. In addition, unemployment has gone up among PRL from 8 per cent in 2010 to 23 per cent in 2015.

Funding update

29 per cent of LCRP funded

As of mid-June 2016, an estimated \$807 million have been allocated by donors to activities implemented by UN agencies and NGOs in Lebanon. Out of the total, around \$722 million have been allocated in support of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, covering 29 per cent of the Plan's overall requirements. In addition to this, UN agencies, NGO partners and the World Bank have reported a carry-over from 2015 of approximately \$344 million.

Fayze's Story

"Garden Wall" helps Fayze support her family



"Garden Walls" in Bar Elias, Bekaa. Source: FAO

"We, the women of the Bekaa, love being productive and cannot stay idle," says Fayze, a Lebanese widow and mother of five who has recently initiated a "Garden Wall" at her house in the village of Bar Elias, a micro-gardening project implemented by FAO and funded by the OCHA managed [Lebanon Humanitarian Fund \(LHF\)](#).

Garden walls are a proven technique to grow vegetables and herbs vertically, without using any arable land. These walls are made from very cheap and readily available material such as used or discarded plastic crates or walls made from recycled plastic. Each crate can be used to plant two consecutive vegetable crops per year and can be used to grow a wide range of summer and winter vegetables that can be harvested throughout the year.

Fayze's children are married and one of her sons is unemployed. Her difficult economic situation requires that she works to support her family and earn a living. She used to work in agriculture with her brothers-in-law. However, family problems that arose this year stopped her from continuing her job.

Fayze started planting seeds provided by FAO two months ago, and has been able to start benefiting from the crops throughout Ramadan. "As you know, we have the tradition of preparing *fatoush* or *tabbouleh* for the *iftar*, and this year we are using our own in-house planted vegetables," says Fayze, adding that the amount is sufficient for her family.

Fayze decided to build on her previous agricultural experience and added new vegetables like cucumbers and lettuce to her micro-garden which included various herbs like coriander, parsley, oregano, and dandelions. "I am also teaching my daughters-in-law how to plant and I supervise them throughout the process. Now they can plant at their homes," she proudly says.

This project primarily targets women-headed households and those with a large number of children. Beneficiaries include 30 landless vulnerable Lebanese households and 120 Syrian households.



Woman tending her micro-garden in Bar Elias, Bekaa. Source: FAO

"I am also teaching my daughters-in-law how to plant and I supervise them throughout the process. Now they can plant at their homes."
- Fayze

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