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# The Day after Tomorrow Understanding Perceptions on Aid Dependency: The cases of Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled

*Conflict Analysis Report – December 2018*

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Supported by

This report was written by an independent researcher as part of a conflict analysis consultancy for the UNDP “Peace Building in Lebanon” Project to inform and support UNDP Lebanon programming, as well as interventions from other partners in the framework of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). Through these reports, UNDP is aiming at providing quality analysis to LCRP Partners on the evolution of local dynamics, highlighting how local and structural issues have impacted and interacted with the consequences of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon. This report has been produced with the support of the Department for International Development (UKDFID).

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# The Day after Tomorrow

## Understanding Perceptions on Aid Dependency: The cases of Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled

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## Acronyms

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IS	Informal Settlement
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LHF	Lebanon Humanitarian Fund
LHSP	Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRL	Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon
PRS	Palestinian Refugees from Syria
SDC	Social Development Centers
UKDFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme

## I. Executive Summary

In 2016, Lebanon ranked ninth among the top-ten aid recipient countries in the world. This group of ten countries has been receiving 60% of all international humanitarian assistance for the past four consecutive years.<sup>1</sup> The Global Humanitarian Assistance report estimates that there are 3.7 million people in Lebanon in need of assistance, of which 1.4 million are forcibly displaced people.<sup>2</sup> The 2018 update to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan estimates Lebanon hosts 1.5 million Syrian refugees, 34,000 Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS), and 35,000 Lebanese returnees in addition to the population of over 277,985 Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL). A further 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese are in need of humanitarian and development assistance.<sup>3</sup> To respond to these striking figures and needs, the donor aid landscape in Lebanon was transformed during the past few years.

Since the beginning of the surge in funding in response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, some voices started to raise the issue of dependency – in particular, as it related to Syrian refugees receiving sustained humanitarian aid. Among these were numerous mayors and political figures from different regions and backgrounds. Recently, this narrative focuses on the assumption that if donor aid is diverted into Syria instead of Lebanon, then this might be one of the ways to facilitate the return of refugees. But very little research has been conducted on the perceptions, likelihood, or extent to which the Lebanese host communities developed aid dependency during the past few years.

This report examines the cases of Wadi Khaled cluster in Akkar and Saadnayel in the Bekaa to understand the perceptions on the preparedness of local authorities, local and international organizations, and donors for an exit strategy and seizing the funds. It also aims to highlight potential conflict triggers in the cases of protracted stay or return of refugees while funding halts.

Most Lebanese interviewees, whether mayors, private sector representatives, or local activists, thought that there is no dependency by Lebanese host communities on donor aid. They did acknowledge the presence of high needs within these communities and highlighted that it might be mistaken for dependency. But when the interviews delved into examples and hypothetical assumptions regarding funding halt, interviewees were better able to share some of the themes they believe are most relevant.

For instance, key informants in both Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled villages were clear that their respective municipal councils are highly dependent on donor funding to implement almost all types of **service projects**, including those related to water, wastewater, solid waste management, livelihoods, and public spaces. This is mainly due, according to the interviewees, to the very limited budgets that their municipalities receive from the central government that can barely cover the municipality's basic costs and operations. In both communities, there is an understanding among all interviewees that these projects were only possible because of the crisis response funds.

**Rental subsidies** are another main theme highlighted as part of the host community's aid dependency. According to a study titled '101 Facts and Figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis' published by the American University in Beirut, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, Syrian refugees in Lebanon paid a total of \$US378 million in 2016 for renting accommodation. In Wadi Khaled, the rental is primarily for unfinished

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<sup>1</sup> Development Initiatives, Global Humanitarian Assistance (2018). Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, 2018. Available at: <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GHA-Report-2018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), 2018. *LCRP 2017-2020 (2018 update)*. Government of Lebanon and the United Nations.

apartments and shops that host the refugee families while in Saadnayel the majority are living in tents. These tents were erected on former agricultural lands which might have a long-term impact on the usage and function of these lands.

On another important note, the **employment** issue with either donor agencies or INGOs or other donor-funded projects and activities was triggered when asking about the direct impact of any funding seizure. In general, interviewees seem to be wary of the potential hard hit in such a scenario. And the general perception of interviewees is that hundreds of jobs will be lost in their communities along with thousands across Lebanon. For example, there are 330 public schools in Lebanon that have second shift classes for Syrian refugee children.<sup>4</sup> Of these, twelve schools are located in Wadi Khaled and are hiring an average of fifty teachers each, hence around 600 teachers from Wadi Khaled have an increased income from teaching Syrian students. Although one of the main sources of tension across Lebanon between Syrian refugees and their host communities are related to the perceived competition over jobs, the decline in funding will exacerbate those tensions if no proper planning for a 'soft-landing' takes into consideration sustainable development in the long run.

NGOs also worry about the uncertainty related to the funding of their activities and operations. Some NGO founders and staff believe that **NGOs dependency** on aid is major nowadays in the absence of any sustainable enterprises that could provide them with ongoing self-funding. They stated that almost all activities in their communities are branded by one of the international donors. There was criticism as well that aid in certain cases 'ruined the spirit of volunteerism and participation' because of the approach used by many INGOs to encourage and

ensure participation of beneficiaries in activities through cash reimbursements.

A general perception among most interviewees, when it comes to refugees and aid dependency, was that most refugees are totally reliant on humanitarian aid, especially when no one at the refugee's household works or earns any type of income. On the other hand, there seems to be an agreement among both Lebanese and Syrian respondents that refugees residing in Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel have much higher dependency on aid than their Lebanese host communities. Some said Syrians are dependent on aid in everything from food to education, shelter to healthcare, and cash through the monthly cash subsidies they receive. And despite the general perception of the tough socioeconomic conditions caused by the crisis, none of the interviewees had such a drastic tone when describing the situation except when it was linked to a scenario where funding halts while refugees remain in the country.

From a **gender perspective**, there were no major variations between men and women on the aforementioned issues of aid dependency cases and the lack of planning for a potential decrease in donor funding or on perceptions of refugees' aid dependency. Most Lebanese respondents, both women and men, believe there is a full dependency by refugees on donor aid. While Syrians, also women and men, had a different opinion with more examples given on how they were not benefiting from various programs as before and how they have to find work to be able to earn a living and care for their families. There is also an agreement among respondents that women, youth, and the disabled are the most vulnerable and will be hardest hit by any decision of donors to withdraw without planning a proper exit strategy.

In that regard, one of the most consistent responses among all interviewees was to confirm their belief that there is an absence of any **exit strategy**. None

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<sup>4</sup> Yassin, Nasser (2018) "101 Facts and Figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis" American University of Beirut, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs.

that they have been engaged in or heard of, at least. Municipalities, local and international NGOs, UN agencies, activists, and all other interviewees were very clear that they do not know of or think that any exit strategies currently exist in Lebanon. There was a clear variation between the different stakeholders interviewed regarding the responsibilities and leadership of kick-starting the exit strategy planning. But on the other hand, there is an agreement that it should be a shared responsibility to develop it. In the meantime, and until a holistic and comprehensive exit strategy is launched, respondents pointed out a major component that should be integrated in the interventions of all donor agencies: **sustainability**. Some respondents discussed the hardships that municipalities and local NGOs face to sustain an activity after the life of donor-funded interventions, ending up either in dependency on aid to sustain the service or to a seize of functionality if that aid was not available. With sustainability also came a focus on the environmental impact of the refugee crisis, especially when it comes to the solid waste and wastewater management. Respondents mentioned these themes as the highest priorities because of their long-term and grave impact on health, livelihoods, and resources. The final section of the report sheds the light on some **recommendations** for short-, medium-, and long-term interventions and strategies related to the development of the exit strategy. To answer the tough question of leadership, one suggestion is to host the discussions under the umbrella of the LCRP that gathers all relevant parties, then move into mobilizing the needed resources and assigning the various roles of ministries and key stakeholders. A few other suggestions included ideas on sustainability through supporting entities to regulate tariffs, create public private partnerships, and other sustainable enterprises. At the core of all this strategy should be the impact on the most vulnerable, such as women, youth, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

## II. Introduction

This Conflict Analysis Report is part of a series of research studies commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by United Kingdom Department for International Development (UKDFID) that aim to understand the perceptions of a variety of stakeholders from the village of Saadnayel and the Wadi Khaled cluster of villages on issues related to aid dependency. The research looks into perceptions on the preparedness of local authorities for a soft-landing if funding levels decrease or come to an end and whether municipalities, local and international NGOs, or donors have been engaged or are planning to be engaged in developing exit strategies. The research suggests advice based on practitioners' knowledge and recommendations from the field.

Both Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled cluster are known to host very large numbers of refugees in comparison to the Lebanese host community population. In Saadnayel, the estimated Lebanese population is 20,000 residents while the official registered number of Syrian refugees is 16,144, as per the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Knowing that some refugees might be residing in Saadnayel but registered in other surrounding villages, these numbers might even be higher. In Wadi Khaled cluster, a recent study<sup>5</sup> by Search for Common Ground reported the estimates of mayors and *mokhtars* to be around 49,900 Lebanese and 36,000 Syrian refugees<sup>6</sup>. Since 2011, with the beginning of the Syrian refugee influx into Wadi Khaled, and Saadnayel later in 2013, these communities witnessed numerous cases of arrests and other incidents,<sup>7</sup> with a surge in 2017 during the Lebanese Armed

<sup>5</sup> Karlidag, Melike & Soukkarieh, Benargere Pineau (2017). Diwan Baseline Assessment. Search for Common Ground Report.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR numbers of registered Syrian refugees in Wadi Khaled is at 17,229 as of September 2018 reports.

<sup>7</sup> Geo-located mapping of conflicts in Lebanon. More details can be found on: <https://civilsociety-centre.org/cap/map>

Forces (LAF) raids on Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) cells all over the country. Also, the proliferation of businesses and small shops owned by Syrian refugees and the Informal Settlements (ISs) in both communities altered the economic landscape.

This report examines the perceptions on the preparedness of local authorities, local and international organizations, and donors for an exit strategy and seizing the funds. It also aims at highlighting potential conflict triggers in the cases of protracted stay or return of refugees when funding halts.

### III. Objectives

This research was designed to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent do stakeholders in Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel (host community, refugees, municipalities, and aid organizations) believe that there is dependency on aid in their area?
  - a. What sort of assistance do these stakeholders believe that beneficiaries are most dependent on?
  - b. In what geographical areas is this dependence perceived as being the greatest?
- 2) To what extent have organizations integrated exit strategies into their work? What plans do organizations have in case of decreased funding?
- 3) What will the main triggers of tension be in the scenario of shrinking or discontinuing aid in these localities?
  - a. Discuss hypothetical scenarios of returning Syrian refugees to Syria as opposed to their prolonged stay in Lebanon.
  - b. How would that impact the most vulnerable communities and groups within these communities, such as women, youth, etc.?

- c. What are the preparations taken by key municipalities or authorities for a 'soft-landing'?

### IV. Methodology

The research methodology of this report consists of the following:

- 1) Primary Data:
  - a. **Five key informant interviews** with the head of Union of Municipalities of Wadi Khaled, mayors from Wadi municipalities, and the elected member of the municipality of Saadnayel following up on the Syrian refugees' portfolio.
  - b. **Twenty-two key informant interviews** with stakeholders from the villages of Wadi Khaled cluster and Saadnayel, including two former mayors, five municipal members, five local business owners, five Syrian refugees, and three local NGO staff members. Among the key stakeholder interviewees were also UNDP's area manager in Bekaa, UNHCR liaison officer, and other key stakeholders.
  - c. **Two focus group discussions** with Lebanese youth from both Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel.
- 2) Secondary Data:
  - a. **Desk study and background analysis:** A review of UNDP reports related to the villages of Wadi Khaled cluster and Saadnayel, especially those uploaded on the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) UNHCR portal or shared on Lebanon Support, as well as the related maps or documents that can provide needed background on the area and the previously identified themes or priorities. A bibliography with all desk review resources can be found in Annex 1.

## General Context

### Aid Dependency: Definition and usage

The term aid dependency is often vaguely used and carries negative connotations. Assumptions underlying the use of the term and the lack of definition can be used to justify both action and inaction regarding decisions over types and levels of assistance. Typically, aid dependency describes concern over people or local economies becoming dependent on humanitarian aid.<sup>8</sup> It can refer to a dependency mentality, where aid beneficiaries are assumed to be expecting continued assistance, which is undermining their own initiative. It can also refer to whole communities becoming dependent on humanitarian assistance, thus undercutting local economies and their self-sufficiency and sustainability. On an individual and social level, aid dependency can be a symbol of extreme poverty and a cause for feelings of shame. Furthermore, aid dependency can refer to governments, parties of conflict, or aid agencies becoming dependent on aid resources.<sup>9</sup>

The term 'aid dependency' is often used in debates over transitioning from humanitarian assistance to development. Some development actors express concern over humanitarian interventions undermining the effectiveness of development programs because, for example, beneficiaries would not be willing to contribute to community projects unpaid after being used to receiving food and other commodities for free.<sup>10</sup>

This argument ignores the complexities of crises and the way humanitarian and development aid can overlap. Often the challenge is the type of funding that happens to be available for a specific

crisis. For example, in protracted refugee situations, aid actors often lack comprehensive solutions in transferring from humanitarian assistance to development.<sup>11</sup> Host governments are usually unwilling or unequipped to include refugees in their development plans. Humanitarian assistance often by-passes states while funding earmarked for development is bilateral and provided to the state. As a result, refugee populations are neglected or humanitarian assistance is stretched to meet the needs of people for years, even decades.<sup>12</sup> The interest to fund an 'emergency' decreases with time and it is easier to get funding in the beginning of a crisis than in protracted situations.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, Harvey and Lind write that literature on livelihoods and coping strategies has shown that people use aid as one of many survival strategies and receiving it does not make people passive. In refugee situations, especially in camp contexts, beneficiaries are often denied a right to employment and the right to movement, leaving few opportunities for self-reliance. In these cases, such as is the case in Lebanon, much depends on the policies of the host country and their political will to solve the situation.<sup>14</sup>

The fear of creating dependency has sometimes been used to justify the scaling down of assistance. This risks pushing people to rely on negative coping mechanisms. Harvey and Lind present that any decision to scale down aid should be based on empirically collected data on the

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<sup>8</sup> Harvey, Paul & Lind, Jeremy (2015). *Dependency and humanitarian relief - A critical analysis*. HPG Research Report. The Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ferris, Elizabeth (2008). *Protracted refugee situations, human rights and civil society*. In Gil Loescher, et al (Eds.) *Protracted Refugee Situations*. United Nations University Press. p.102.

<sup>12</sup> Aleinikoff, Alexander T. (2015). *From Dependence to Self-reliance - Changing the Paradigm in Protracted Refugee Situations*. Policy brief. Transatlantic Council on Migration..

<sup>13</sup> Ferris, Elizabeth (2008). *Protracted refugee situations, human rights and civil society*. In Gil Loescher, et al (Eds.) *Protracted Refugee Situations*. United Nations University Press. p.102.

<sup>14</sup> Harvey, Paul & Lind, Jeremy (2015). *Dependency and humanitarian relief - A critical analysis*. HPG Research Report. The Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute..

needs of people. And, in crisis situations, people face high vulnerability and risk and their regular livelihoods are not available, thus dependency on assistance is a natural outcome. The main focus should not be whether aid should be delivered, but how it can be delivered in a way that respects people's autonomy and allows them to exercise deliberation regarding their own livelihood strategies. Moreover, many times it can be highly challenging to depend on aid, when aid is not delivered transparently or regularly and when people are not properly informed about what aid they are entitled to receive. If people can depend on aid, they can better plan their livelihood strategies.<sup>15</sup>

Aleinikoff suggests that humanitarian agencies should encourage a narrative shift where host and origin countries would perceive refugees as a benefit instead of a burden and recognize their potential. Humanitarian agencies could encourage this shift by improving individual level livelihood interventions, by advocating for the right to work, and by implementing bigger development projects, for example, on infrastructure. These would be ways to increase the livelihood opportunities of refugee populations and to convince host countries and donors to make a longer term and sustainable investment in them.<sup>16</sup>

In this report, aid dependency will be defined as follows. A country is aid dependent when it cannot perform many of the core functions of government, such as delivering basic public services like schools and clinics, without foreign aid. The report 'Real Aid, Ending Aid Dependency' identifies aid dependency as when aid funds a high percentage of government budget expenditure, on an ongoing basis. Another way to measure dependency is the proportion of the whole economy (Gross National Income) that is made up of aid flows. The two

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Aleinikoff, Alexander T. (2015). *From Dependence to Self-reliance - Changing the Paradigm in Protracted Refugee Situations*. Policy brief. Transatlantic Council on Migration.

ratios (aid/budget expenditure and aid/GNI) are closely correlated.<sup>17</sup>

## Status of Humanitarian Support in Lebanon

Lebanon is one of the top ten aid recipient countries in the world. This group of ten countries received 60% of all international humanitarian assistance in 2017. The Global Humanitarian Assistance report estimates that there are 3.7 million people in Lebanon in need of assistance, of which 1.4 million are forcibly displaced people.<sup>18</sup> The 2018 update to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) estimates Lebanon hosts 1.5 million Syrian refugees, 34,000 Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS), and 35,000 Lebanese returnees in addition to the population of over 277,985 Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL). A further 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese need humanitarian and development assistance.<sup>19</sup>

Most of the population in need live in the most vulnerable communities of the country, and their protracted situation has led an increasing amount of families to rely on negative coping mechanisms or to become indebted. Around 69% of the Syrian refugees live under the poverty line, according to the 2018 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) conducted by UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF. Furthermore, 90% of the Syrian households were, to some extent, food insecure, and two-thirds had relied on some kind of assistance in the months before the survey, making a majority of the refugee population aid dependent.<sup>20</sup> There are not many self-reliance strategies available for refugees in Lebanon, and humanitarian assistance has not been able to match the growing needs of the

<sup>17</sup> Action Aid, Real Aid 3 "Ending Aid Dependency". (2011) [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full\\_Report\\_2328.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_2328.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), 2018. *LCRP 2017-2020 (2018 update)*. Government of Lebanon and the United Nations..

<sup>20</sup> *Vulnerability assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR)* 2018. UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP.

refugee population. For example, in December 2018, only 52% of the necessary funding had been received, including the carry-over from 2017.<sup>21</sup>

To meet humanitarian needs, the funding requirement in 2018 increased from previous years and was set at around US\$2.68 billion. By December 2018, Lebanon had received slightly under US\$1.1 billion in humanitarian assistance in addition to US\$312 million carried over from 2017, leaving a gap of around US\$1.28 billion.<sup>22</sup> As a response to the drop in humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable groups, the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) launched a Standard Allocation of US\$6.5 million to meet needs of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS), People with Specific Needs (PwSN) and sexual/gender-based violence survivors, which are identified as the three most vulnerable groups in need of assistance.<sup>23</sup> Yet, if following the trend of previous years, the funding requirements most likely will not be met in 2019. The LCRP acknowledges that the level of humanitarian assistance will likely not be sustained throughout the four-year Crisis Response Plan and calls for international actors to further support Lebanon through other funding channels, such a development assistance.<sup>24</sup>

Despite efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, both aid recipients and local civil society actors in Lebanon have expressed disappointment on the effectiveness and fairness of the humanitarian response. Interviews and focus groups conducted for the 2015 World Humanitarian Summit in

Lebanon (as well as in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Yemen) showed, for example, that many aid recipients believe humanitarian organizations prioritize the views of donors over the target populations and that there is little accountability. According to the Summit, in Lebanon many respondents felt that there was little coordination between different humanitarian agencies, which had led to duplication of aid. They also wished for opportunities to break their dependency on aid distributions and make their own income and criticized the lack of choice about what kind of aid they receive, feeling that their priority needs were not met.<sup>25</sup> A 2017 survey on refugee perceptions in Lebanon showed that there is high awareness among refugees over the kind of aid that is available to them. The survey also showed that many of the priority needs are not met, of which water, food, housing, and medicine were most commonly mentioned as unmet needs. Many of the respondents felt that aid was unfairly distributed and that they were not involved in the decision-making of humanitarian organizations.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, many local NGOs have also experienced that they have been left out of the decision-making process of donors and big humanitarian organizations. For example, clear inequality is present in global humanitarian funding trends. In 2017 local or national NGOs received directly from donors only 0.4% of the overall humanitarian assistance that was reported to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS).<sup>27</sup> In Syria, in 2014, 75% of the humanitarian work was

<sup>21</sup> Inter-Agency Coordination, Lebanon 2018. *LCRP 2018 End Year Funding Update*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67922>.

<sup>22</sup> Syria Regional Refugee Response (SRRP), 2018. "Lebanon, Funding requirements". Accessed on 19.10.2018, available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>

<sup>23</sup> OCHA, 2018. "Lebanon: Humanitarian Fund to step up support to the most vulnerable groups." Accessed on 8.11.2018, available at <https://www.unocha.org/story/lebanon-humanitarian-fund-step-support-most-vulnerable-groups>

<sup>24</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), 2018. *LCRP 2017-2020 (2018 update)*. Government of Lebanon and the United Nations

<sup>25</sup> IRIN, 2015. In-depth: "What refugees really think of aid agencies". Accessed on 5.11.2018, available at <http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2015/03/05/what-refugees-really-think-aid-agencies>

<sup>26</sup> Mixed Migration Platform, 2017. *Refugee Perceptions in Lebanon - Summary of Focus Group Discussions*. Accessed on 12.11.2018, available at [http://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Refugee-perceptions-in-Lebanon\\_Round-2.pdf](http://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Refugee-perceptions-in-Lebanon_Round-2.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Development Initiatives, 2018. *Global Humanitarian Assistance report 2018*.

carried out by Syrian actors while only 0.3% of direct funding and 9.3% of indirect funding of the overall assistance was available to them.<sup>28</sup> Hence, the international community has significant power in directing funds. This power imbalance has been criticized by local and national NGOs in Lebanon. In a study published by ALNAP, the informants criticize the emergency approach taken by Lebanese authorities and the international community and the standardized programmes that the international organization have implemented without consulting or listening to the local sector and their expertise. Other issues that were highlighted were the way in which international actors, when hiring staff, emphasized qualities such as expertise in the humanitarian system instead of knowledge in social work and the field context. They also lacked a community-based approach. Furthermore, the informants expressed that, in the context of the Syrian crisis, their expertise had not been recognized and the approach of the international community had been inflexible.<sup>29</sup>

The local and international actors sometimes had different opinions or preferences about the timing and pace in which projects were designed and implemented. In addition, some informants felt that the humanitarian funding forced many local organizations to change the kind of projects they were working on to qualify for the funds.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, a study on the crisis preparedness and expertise of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in Lebanon found that emergency funding forced many CBOs to change their priorities and approach. Having to change their approach to qualify for humanitarian funds could have a negative impact on their ability to maintain the trust that they had gained from their long-term commitment to the

community.<sup>31</sup> Being dependent on donor funds also affected the local NGOs ability to locally prepare for crisis as the donor requirements for humanitarian funding do not necessarily leave space for context-specific measures. Thus, in Lebanon, to avoid dependency and improve the sustainability of their activities, many CBOs aimed for a variety of funds from different sources.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, with tensions within the aid community and between aid providers and beneficiaries already present, tensions could rise further if thinking around dependency and exit strategies are not considered. These tensions might also be exacerbated if the local communities, including key stakeholders and NGOs, are not engaged in the decision-making process.

## Geographic Context

### Wadi Khaled in Akkar:

Wadi Khaled is located in north Lebanon, in the Akkar Governorate, by the border of Syria. It stretches over forty square kilometers. It is located some fort-five kilometers from Halba, the capital of the governorate, and roughly eighty kilometers from the city of Tripoli. Wadi Khaled is composed of twenty-two villages.<sup>33</sup> The population consists of a Sunni majority, a few thousand Alawites,<sup>34</sup> and some Shiites living in Qarha.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Mansour, Kholoud (2017). *UN Humanitarian Coordination in Lebanon - The Consequences of Excluding Syrian Actors*. Research Paper, Chatham House: International Security Department.

<sup>29</sup> Saavedra, Luz (2016). *We know our wounds: National and local organizations involved in humanitarian response in Lebanon*. ALNAP country study.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Mansour, Kholoud (2017). *UN Humanitarian Coordination in Lebanon - The Consequences of Excluding Syrian Actors*. Research Paper, Chatham House: International Security Department.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Qarha, Rjem Hussain, Rjem Khalaf, Rjem Issa, Awada, Al Mqayblef, Knaise, Al Bqayaa, Bani Sakhr, Khat el Petrol, Karam Zabedin, Jermnaya, Al Rama, Al Hishe, Amayer, Dar el Awada, Al Fared, Albaelia, Al Mahata, Al Kalkha, Al Mujdal and Alssaaid.

<sup>34</sup> According to key informants from Wadi Khaled, none of the Alawites registered in the area are actually living there. They either reside in Jabal Mohsen, Sahel Akkar, or inside Syria.

<sup>35</sup> Karlidag, Melike & Soukkarieh, Benargere Pineau (2017). *Diwan Base-line Assessment*. Search for Common Ground Report.

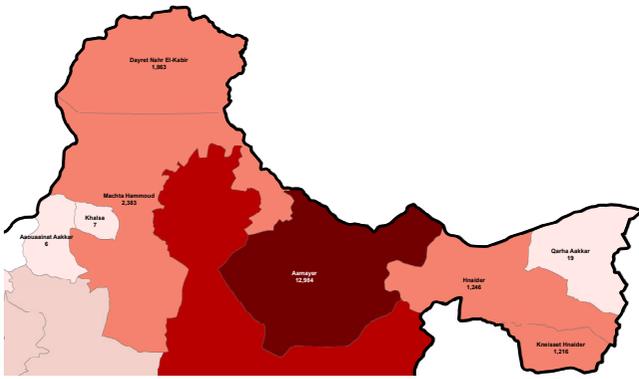


Figure 1. Map of Wadi Khaled Cluster of villages

In 2010, most Wadi Khaled villages witnessed their first municipal elections ever. These municipal councils were already busy less than a year into their mandate with responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. Currently, there are nine municipalities in Wadi Khaled. One, Jermnaya-El Rama, has a dissolved municipal council, and another, Awwade, was established during the 2016 elections. Local authorities in Wadi Khaled have been struggling to manage the situation and have not received much support from the central government. The municipalities are relatively new and inexperienced and have encountered difficulty in managing donor funds and meeting donor requirements. One challenge is the differences in working methods and approach between the municipalities and INGOs, resulting in low levels of trust about funds being spent effectively.<sup>36</sup> The Wadi Khaled municipalities, with support from UNDP through the Mechanisms for Social Stability, established a Union of Municipalities which was also elected in 2016.

## Economic Situation

Wadi Khaled is one of the poorest areas in Lebanon.<sup>37</sup> Due to its geographical location close

<sup>36</sup> Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2014. *Responding to the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon: Recovery Framework for Wadi Khaled and Akroum, Akkar*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

<sup>37</sup> Medecins sans Frontieres, (2017). Lebanon: “Refugees and host community bound by suffering”. Accessed on 11.11.2018, available at <https://www.msf.org/lebanon-refugees-and-host-community-bound-suffering>

to the Syria–Lebanon border and its proximity to conflict hotspots in Syria in the beginning of the war, this already marginalized area was the first one to host big numbers of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Furthermore, Wadi Khaled used to rely on trade between Lebanon and Syria, and the border closure between the two countries has had a dramatically negative impact on the cluster’s economy.<sup>38</sup> In addition to diminished trade, the weakened security situation has negatively impacted farmers by hampering irrigation and access to land.<sup>39</sup> Economic hardship and increasing rates of unemployment affect both the Lebanese and Syrian residents of Wadi Khaled.<sup>40</sup> The competition for jobs has increased, especially among non-skilled and semi-skilled workers and in the agriculture and construction work sectors.<sup>41</sup> There are reports from Lebanese households that their income has dropped even 60% while the availability of jobs has decreased 50% compared to before the Syrian war.<sup>42</sup>

## Social Situation

In addition to business and trade relations, the inhabitants of Wadi Khaled also had close social and familial ties to their Syrian neighbours. People in Wadi Khaled opened their homes to Syrian refugees,<sup>43</sup> yet the difficult economic situation

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2014. *Responding to the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon: Recovery Framework for Wadi Khaled and Akroum, Akkar*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

<sup>40</sup> Medecins sans Frontieres, (2017). Lebanon: “Refugees and host community bound by suffering”. Accessed on 11.11.2018, available at <https://www.msf.org/lebanon-refugees-and-host-community-bound-suffering>

<sup>41</sup> International Labour Organization (2013). “Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon And Their Employment Profile”. Available at [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/wcms\\_240134.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/wcms_240134.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2014. *Responding to the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon: Recovery Framework for Wadi Khaled and Akroum, Akkar*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

<sup>43</sup> UNDP Peace Building in Lebanon “Joint news supplement” 2014. Avail-

has created tensions between the communities. The tensions have been further exacerbated by the perception that assistance that was available to vulnerable Lebanese households before was diverted to the refugee response.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, hosting refugees in private homes has significantly increased household expenditure and exhausted resources, resulting in negative coping mechanisms, such as buying food on credit and buying food of worse quality.<sup>45</sup>

The influx of refugees has even doubled the population in some villages, putting a high pressure on already weak public services and infrastructure, including health and education services, waste management, electricity, and water supply. In 2013, there was a total of six medical clinics in Wadi Khaled and Akroum, but they were in bad condition. At this time, clinics also prioritized Syrian refugees over Lebanese residents due to their contracts with humanitarian organizations.<sup>46</sup>

## Security Situation

Wadi Khaled's security has fluctuated a lot since the early days of the Syrian uprising. Knowing that it was the first area to receive Syrian refugees crossing the porous border, which was used for smuggling and cross-border trade for years, the area was cordoned by both the Syrian Arab Army from one side and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) from the other. This had direct consequences on the local life in these areas.<sup>47</sup> The porous border, which used to provide a main source of

able at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/41045>

<sup>44</sup> Sam van Vliet, Guita Hourani, "Regional differences in the conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon", Civil Society Knowledge Center, Lebanon Support, April 2014. Available at <http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/regional-differences-conditions-syrian-refugees-lebanon>

<sup>45</sup> Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2014. Responding to the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon: *Recovery Framework for Wadi Khaled and Akroum, Akkar*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Mouawad, Jamil (2018) "Lebanon's border areas in light of the Syrian war: New actors, old marginalization." European University Institute.

income and livelihoods to its residents, primarily the youth, was used by militants supporting the revolution in Syria during its early years. This was one main reason behind the lockdown but also behind the deterioration of the security situation in general, opening the door for some skirmishes at the borders, but also for numerous arrests and increased tensions among residents. Since the Free Syrian Army and other militias lost grounds in the nearby Homs and Qusayr, Wadi Khaled has been calm with no major security incidents taking place. The cordoning and even the scheduling of large trucks transporting commodities or materials continues, which affects commerce and livelihoods to a large extent.

## Saadnayel in the Bekaa

Saadnayel is located in the Bekaa Governorate, near the city of Zahle. The town is situated strategically near the crossroads between the Beirut–Damascus highway and the main road connecting the northern and southern Bekaa. Thus, it has always been a node for transportation and commerce, especially when it comes to shops and vendors located on the international road. A historic train station is located in Saadnayel, and it was just rehabilitated in 2015 to serve as a park. Saadnayel is a predominately Sunni community which has been mainly aligned with Future Movement for over a decade, as the different municipal and parliamentary elections showed.

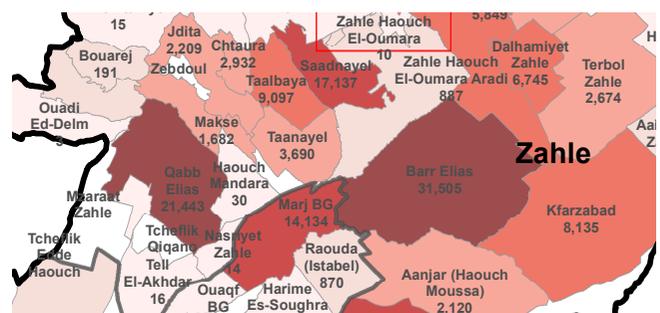


Figure 2. Map of Central Bekaa including Saadnayel

## Economic Situation

Most residents of Saadnayel work in agriculture and commerce along with a significant number of Lebanese expats living in Canada and Australia.

The village hosts a major market in the region, and it is specialized in carpentry and woodworks.<sup>48</sup> Agriculture on the other hand, which represents a source of income for a considerable number of residents in Saadnayel, mainly due to the very good soil quality, was affected by the crisis. In Saadnayel, onions, potatoes, and other vegetables are the main crops that used to provide locals with decent incomes; although recently, rental fees of land to ISs and to Syrians is providing higher incomes. Hence, the crisis will have an obvious impact on local agriculture. Saadnayel's proximity to Zahle allows it to be close to the bulk of industrial activity in the Bekaa with 278 industrial companies present at the Zahle district level.<sup>49</sup>

## Social Situation

There are at least two primary healthcare centres in Saadnayel. The presence of Syrian refugees has put a strain on resources in the town, according to the mayor, who says that their presence has drastically impacted infrastructures that were already under strain.<sup>50</sup> The Lebanese residents of Saadnayel are primarily Sunni and so are the Syrian refugees. This provided an initial cause of empathy and encouraged the open-door policy of the influx.

## Security Situation

In the latest study about Saadnayel, Aktis Strategy highlighted a shift towards competition and away from dialogue and cooperation. This was particularly reported among respondents with low education levels in the low-income group, as well as with unemployed respondents. 'This is concerning, given the large number of low income and unemployed respondents in Saadnayel, and should be watched carefully.' The report also sheds the light on the low trust in municipal council,

<sup>48</sup> <http://investinlebanon.gov.lb/Content/uploads/Side-Block/170616110924892~INVESTMENT%20OPPORTUNITIES%20IN%20WEST%20BEKAA.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

with only 15% of respondents who identified the municipality as the entity most trusted to provide services, down from 42%.<sup>51</sup> Saadnayel remains accessible and part of a larger connected district with its surrounding villages. It can be affected by LAF raids or arrests in nearby villages or any orders to transfer or relocate ISs. Therefore, the ad hoc character or the refugee-related issues keep the anxiety and tension high.

## Key Findings

### Perceptions on Aid Dependency: The cases of Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel

Most Lebanese key informants interviewed for this research, whether mayors, private sector representatives, or local activists, started their response by stating that they do not believe there is a dependency by Lebanese host communities on donor aid. The majority believed that there are high needs within these communities that might be mistaken for dependency. In their defence of that perception, several respondents claimed that international aid offered little and insignificant assistance to the Lebanese host communities in comparison to the Syrian refugees. And they go on to list the food and non-food rations, rent, healthcare, and education subsidies that donors offer to Syrian refugees, giving them economic leverage which allows them to compete in a fiercer way over already limited job opportunities.

'We cannot really speak about dependency of Lebanese residents on aid from international donors when the majority of this aid goes to Syrians. Had it been fairly distributed, we might have witnessed that.' – Former municipal council member, Wadi Khaled

Some others directly expressed concerns related to corruption and mismanagement of humanitarian aid by donors, INGOs, local NGOs, and municipalities. Something they consider to be

<sup>51</sup> Aktis strategy (2016) "Additional Analysis Report." Lebanon Host Community Support Program

one of the main reasons that aid never reached the beneficiaries regularly or abundantly; hence, never creating aid dependency. Therefore, key informants primarily perceived aid dependency as directly related to food and non-food items and other subsidies without relating it to additional jobs in their regions or the economic cycle it boosts for vendors and service providers who are part of the value chain of humanitarian aid suppliers. For instance, the World Food Program stated that they work with twenty-three vendors in Wadi Khaled cluster and three in Saadnayel to channel their aid to beneficiaries in these localities. But when specifically asked about dependency in non-humanitarian issues, respondents would recall numerous Lebanese individuals and entities that they perceive are aid dependent and would be highly affected in case of assistance reduction or termination. And while there are some similar trends regarding the most dependent groups or sectors, there are significant variations between the area of Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel.

## Service Projects Dependency

Key informants in both Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled villages reported their municipal councils' dependency on donor funding to implement almost all types of development projects, such as those related to water, wastewater, livelihoods, and public spaces. They all noted the very limited budgets that their municipalities receive from the central government, which is twice as high due to

the refugees, that can barely cover the cost of solid waste collection, staff salaries, and other basic infrastructure repairs or rehabilitation. 'I cannot imagine where would we be as a municipality and how would we have dealt with the Syrian refugee influx without the aid received during the past years,' says one of the former mayors interviewed. This sentiment resonated during the interview with a high-level donor employee who said, 'I don't know how solid waste management would have been in the Bekaa if we didn't intervene from the beginning. With everything we are doing, we are still not able to fill the gaps completely.' Therefore, with higher needs in the service delivery sectors comes a higher dependency on aid, but that of development, rather than humanitarian, character. One municipal member in Saadnayel stated that, 'It is not a matter of dependency when it comes to some of these services such as potable water. But rather it is the mediator role that the international donor can play in some projects to help us as a municipality when we cannot implement because it is not in our mandate but that of the regional water establishments.' Hence, the gaps that are being filled, in his opinion, are not only due to municipal lack of funds, but, in some cases, because of dereliction from some ministries or governmental entities.

In both Saadnayel and the cluster of Wadi Khaled villages, there seems to be an understanding among all interviewees that development projects



Figure 3. UNDP - LHSP supported the rehabilitation of a bridge (left) and construction of football playground (right) in Saadnayel

that came to their villages through crisis response funding could not have been done otherwise. Annex 2 lists the projects that UNDP and partners implemented under the umbrella of the Lebanon Host Community Support Program (LHSP). The list highlights the variety and scale of the donor aid in supporting non-humanitarian service and livelihoods projects.

rehabilitation of a bridge (left) and construction of football playground (right) in Saadnayel

## Dependency on Rental Subsidies

Lebanese constituencies are also dependent on donor funding that subsidizes rental fees for apartments occupied by refugees or land where ISs are erected. The latter is more common in Saadnayel than Wadi Khaled, since refugees are mainly renting apartments or shops for shelter, as per local observations. But in both cases the rental revenue is a major source of income to Lebanese landlords. According to a council member in Saadnayel, around 15% of the Lebanese residents benefited from this increased income. According to a study titled ‘101 Facts and Figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis’ published by the American University in Beirut, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, Syrian refugees in Lebanon paid a total of \$US378 million in 2016 for renting accommodations.

‘I used to rent a piece of land for agriculture for US\$100 per year, now it is generating around US\$900 per month for its owner. This is yet another reason why agriculture is almost dead in the village because landlords found more money in renting these plots to refugees.’ - Farmer from Saadnayel

The proliferation of ISs, though, reduced the agricultural plots of land as landlords shifted their functionality, which might have a longer-term impact if not taken into consideration. One farmer questioned whether these plots will ever be suitable for agriculture again after all these layers

of cement for the tent bases or the waste dumped into it. ‘The cost of rehabilitating these lands for agriculture will be much higher than any gains or short-term income that landlords did during these few years because environmental damage might just be irreversible.’

## Employment Dependency

Another aid dependency identified among Lebanese host communities was related to jobs, especially with local NGOs implementing donor-funded projects in various humanitarian fields. One NGO operating in Akkar hires around fifty staff members from the Wadi Khaled cluster alone. ‘Akkar Network for Development (AND) might be the biggest employer after schools in Wadi Khaled because of the level of operations they have in the crisis response. What will happen to these employees when aid shrinks? And who will be able to hire them for the same level of salaries?’ one FGD participants questioned.

Schools, on the other hand, are also reliant on donor funding to provide jobs to local staff for teaching the second shift for Syrian refugee students. There are 330 public schools in Lebanon that have second shift classes for Syrian refugee children<sup>52</sup>. According to one of the teachers in Wadi Khaled, there are around twelve schools who hire an average of fifty teachers each, hence around 600 teachers from Wadi Khaled have an increased income from teaching Syrian students. Some of these teachers only teach during the second shift and therefore they rely completely on the money coming from the humanitarian aid. In addition, bus drivers and small shops benefit from school-related sales. Meanwhile in Saadnayel, a municipal member indicated that only one public school serves a second shift for Syrian refugees with around ten teachers who benefit from that increased pay. But a participant in the FGD

<sup>52</sup> Yassin, Nasser (2018) ‘101 Facts and Figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis’ American University of Beirut, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs..

in Saadnayel highlighted that ‘some Lebanese parents are not very comfortable about the second shift arrangement because they believe that it is exhausting to teachers who get to teach for so many hours per day which might be affecting the quality of teaching their kids are receiving in the morning shift.’

One would also think that there is dependency on INGO and UN agency jobs for local staff from Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel for their operations, but local activists and municipal members had a different opinion. In fact, the issue of employment at international organizations seemed to be a tension trigger between these communities and some of their neighbouring villages such as Qubayyat in the North and Zahle in the Bekaa. These towns host several reputable missionary schools which have been teaching foreign languages, particularly English and French, for a couple hundred years. Thus, the perception is that there is better education in Zahle and Qubayyat than in their surrounding villages, such as Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled, which might have been why many INGO employees are hired from there. But for Wadi Khaled activists, it is not only a matter of better education, since ‘we have a lot of university graduates, including engineers, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals, but INGOs only hire youth from Wadi Khaled as drivers,’ says one of the FGD participants. ‘[W]hile field officers and managers are always Christians from Qubayyat. And this is unfair because Qubayyat barely hosts any refugees.’ The same resonated about Zahle with even more discontent that ‘the city of Zahle in fact evicted the refugees who were residing there but still has the lion’s share from employment in INGOs and UN agencies.’ Even though the sectarian variation between these communities might have added to the feeling of victimization from perceived favouritism, it seems that communities got used to this reality without any signs of reacting or mobilizing efforts to change it despite their long-standing frustration.

In general, interviewees brace for a hard hit when it comes to employment opportunities in the case of seizing donor funds. The general perception is that hundreds of jobs will be lost in those communities and maybe thousands throughout Lebanon. Despite the fact that one of the main sources of tension between Syrian refugees and their host communities across Lebanon is related to the perceived competition over jobs, the decline in funding will exacerbate those tensions if no proper planning for a ‘soft-landing’ takes into consideration sustainable development in the long run.

## NGOs Dependency

‘For many participants, it became like a job whereby they come for the stipends and transportation fee. Nowadays, you cannot bring anyone to a training or workshop without paying them US\$10 to US\$20 per day. Imagine how we as nascent or small NGOs in the regions can afford such costs when the funding stops. If we request that beneficiaries contribute with whatever small amount for the activities, no one would participate.’ – head of a local group Saadnayel

Another perspective regarding dependency was related to the activities and initiatives conducted by local NGOs. Founders and staff of local NGOs highlighted that their entities’ dependency on aid is major nowadays in the absence of any sustainable enterprises that could provide ongoing self-funding. Some highlighted the fact that almost all activities currently being implemented in their communities are branded by one of the international donors. One would argue that this has always been the case with initiatives and activities, but what is different after the recent crisis response is the considerable amounts of cash that were poured into these activities which ‘ruined the spirit of volunteerism and participation,’ according to an FGD who criticized the approach used by many INGOs to encourage and ensure

participation of beneficiaries in activities through cash reimbursements. That perspective is shared by most local NGO staff and activists interviewed for the purpose of this research.

Another point raised regarding the dependency of local NGOs on donor funding is the drift it is creating between the Lebanese themselves. Whereby those who are not in line with the objectives or work of certain NGOs are accusing them of encouraging the Syrian refugees to stay in Lebanon in order to keep benefiting from the donor funds covering their activities.

Numerous NGOs in Lebanon benefited from international donor funding for years, especially during or post-crisis. For many, this is one of the reasons behind the proliferation of NGOs across the country, in many cases, doing the work of local authorities. In the clusters of Wadi Khaled villages and Saadnayel, though, this did not seem to be the case. In fact, respondents just named a couple of NGOs in each of these communities, despite the fact that numerous INGOs and national NGOs came to offer services and implement projects. The research could not assess or find exact reasons that hindered the development of more NGOs or initiatives in these communities. But to answer the question of dependency, the humble presence of local NGOs might be an indicator that there is less reliance or dependency in general on such type of entities in these areas unless it is under the umbrella of the crisis response.

## Refugees: A perspective about them vs. theirs

The general perception among most interviewees, when it comes to refugees and aid dependency, was that most refugees are totally reliant on humanitarian aid. This is true in some cases where no one at the refugee's household works or earns any type of income. These cases were described specifically for refugee single mothers or orphans. But the same interviewees stated that the majority of Syrians work in various types

of unskilled labour for low daily wages when describing the competition over jobs they place within the Lebanese communities. Therefore, there is a contradiction in the former description of refugees' total dependency on donor funding versus the latter portrayal of their heavy presence in the labour force. This is because they cannot be totally dependent if they have other income to rely on, unless that income was based on donor funded cash for work programming. In fact, UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations are removing many beneficiaries from their lists because they have jobs or they have the capacity to work, so they do not fulfil their aid criteria according to unofficial information from a humanitarian worker. One respondent shared local news circulating among residents of Wadi Khaled 'that aid organizations, mainly the UNHCR, removed 8,000 beneficiaries from their lists in 2018.' And in general, most interviewees stated that they hear such rumours or news all the time in their communities, but none of them could verify such information. They all share a common belief that humanitarian aid to Syrians and the number of Syrian refugees benefiting from direct assistance gradually decreased during the past few years.

'Syrians are better merchants, most of them opened their own workshops such as mechanic repair, upcycling materials, retailers, and even street vendors. As long as it is a profitable business, they'll do it.' – business owner in Saadnayel

'Syrians have since the beginning of the crisis been dependent. The system in Lebanon did not help to get them to be self-reliant.' One senior humanitarian aid worker explains, and he adds that 'Some of them broke the cycle, when they felt what they were getting was not enough, meanwhile a lot are also not getting aid, so they have to work. Most ISs that we used to visit would be empty from men because they're at work while women also and children work in cultivation.' This reiterates what other key informants, whether

local authorities or civil society and activists, have said. But only one respondent gave unconfirmed numbers regarding the issue; most respondents claimed that there is no reliable data describing the situation from an economic and labour force perspective. He stated that '47% of Syrians can work in Lebanon because the assumption is that everyone over fifteen years old is part of the labour force while the others have nothing but aid.' That is almost half a million labourers, both skilled and unskilled, in an already teetering economy. With a stagnant real estate market and a struggling agriculture sector – due to the closure of the land borders into the Gulf since 2011 – both of which mainly employed Syrians, many other sectors became susceptible to an increased number of labourers trying to make a living. In Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel, local respondents confirmed that Syrian refugees attempt to take any available work opportunity, even if it is not within the three allowed sectors by the government.

On the other hand, there seems to be an agreement among both Lebanese or Syrian respondents that refugees residing in Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel have much higher dependency on aid than their Lebanese host community. Some said Syrians are dependent on aid in everything from food to education, shelter to healthcare, and cash through the monthly cash subsidies they receive. The mayor of Saadnayel, despite the fact that he was not interviewed for this research due to his travel, was quoted a couple years ago in a local magazine, saying 'Syrian refugees are used to free living in Lebanon. They will not return to their country easily. There is an occupation of Lebanon and we will all pay the price.'<sup>53</sup> Such sentiment resonates in many Lebanese communities, especially those that have long-term grievances or unsettled history with Syria. In Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled, despite the general perception of the tough socioeconomic conditions caused by

the crisis, none of the interviewees had such a drastic tone when describing the situation. except when it was linked to a scenario whereby funding halts while refugees remain in the country.

In fact, the interviewees were asked to comment on both scenarios: a return of refugees to Syria soon and a protracted stay. In both cases, they were asked to take into consideration an assumed halting of donor funds. Most respondents thought that a protracted stay will lead to a disaster. They only had gloomy descriptions of how bad the situation can get on the socioeconomic and security levels. Most of them believe that theft will be on the rise, along with other types of crimes, because of the dire need that refugees will be facing. 'Put yourself in their shoes,' said a respondent in Saadnayel, 'if your kids are starving at home, what do you think you might do?' Another key informant agrees with this perspective and adds, 'If that scenario happens, Syrians will invade the job market even more.' And from a security perspective, the common response was as grave as 'the country's security will be out of control.' Even Syrian refugees acknowledged how bad the situation might be if aid recedes. For some, it is a matter of 'life or death.'

'How come on one hand the Lebanese government is restricting us from working except in a couple of sectors, and on the other hand the UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies stop their aid because we are able to work. Isn't this considered to be encouraging us to break the law?' – Syrian refugee in Wadi Khaled

Syrian refugees interviewed in both Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled's cluster were not very consistent when it comes to listing the various services they receive. A lot of variations between families, regions, living conditions, and other factors were noted from the different respondents. In fact, that inconsistency was reported as one of the reasons they, as refugees, do not consider themselves dependent on donor aid. 'If you don't know when

<sup>53</sup> *Private Magazine* Interview with Saadnayel mayor Khalil Shahemi. (June 2017). Accessed on 11.25.2018 at: <https://bit.ly/2D7Vp9N>

will you and your family be taken off the Umam<sup>54</sup> list, how could you not try to find alternatives and protect yourself and your family?’ explained one Syrian respondent. During this research, several Syrians claimed that they are not benefiting from the cash subsidies anymore because they were deemed by UNHCR as able to work. But they also spoke about the hardships they face with work and legal papers. ‘Nowadays, the State Security are monitoring each and every shop and they actually close those which are owned by Syrians. Any business should be owned or registered through a Lebanese,’ explained a Syrian refugee in Saadnayel. But the municipality did not provide data about how many shops were run by Syrians or how many were closed recently. While in Wadi Khaled, the lines are blurrier, with many close knit familial and clan relationships between the host communities and refugees. Hence, the overall response is that there are many such shops in the various villages. but, in many cases, there are partnerships or agreements between both sides on how to manage it and distribute profits. Again, no clear assessment of the impact and scale of that issue has been done so far.

## A Gender Perspective to Aid Dependency

Since all representatives of local authorities met during this research were men, the FGDs and interviews with civil society representatives made sure to involve women, around half of respondents, to reflect their perspective. But also, male respondents were asked how they thought a funding halt would impact the most vulnerable groups in the community, such as women, youth, and the disabled.

In general, there were no major variations between men and women on the aforementioned issues of aid dependency cases and the lack of planning for a potential decrease in donor funding. There

was also no variation regarding perspectives and perceptions of refugees’ aid dependency. Most Lebanese respondents, both women and men, believe there is a full dependency by refugees on donor aid. While Syrians, also women and men, had a different opinion, with more examples given on how they were not benefiting from various programs as before and how they have to find work to be able to earn a living and support their families.

There is also an agreement among respondents that women, youth, and the disabled are the most vulnerable and will be hardest hit by any donor decision to withdraw without planning a proper exit strategy. In the scenario of a protracted refugee stay in the case of seized funding, the situation will be ‘miserable’ said a head of a youth group in Saadnayel. She added that ‘Even now with whatever is being done to women and youth, and the specialized programs that target them, and the international community is not being able to fill the necessary gaps. Imagine what will happen if this stops with no alternatives.’ FGD participants expected higher rates of protection issues and gender-based violence (GBV) cases if support diminishes. During the past few years, donor programs supported legal assistance for women. Most of the NGOs and safe spaces or centres working on GBV-related programs are currently funded through the crisis response funds. This can include case management, psychotherapy, legal representation and lawyers’ fees, alternative shelter or safe havens, and many more services. The issue raised by activists and local NGO staff engaged in relevant programming highlighted that activities that entail trust building usually need long-term engagement with communities, especially women. For instance, an FGD participant stated that ‘In Wadi Khaled it took three years for women to start coming to the safe space because building trust is a long process.’ While another interviewee reiterated that ‘Change takes a lot of time when dealing with women and children.’

<sup>54</sup> Umam is the literal translation for Nations. And it is short for United

Nations and used usually to refer to all LCRP partners and NGOs.

When discussing youth-related issues, the main concern across both communities are the soaring unemployment rates. This has been a long-standing issue, especially in border areas whereby ‘youth used to dropout from school at early ages to work in smuggling as it earns them more money than education,’ as a young FGD participant stated. He also added that ‘Since 2011, smuggling routes were closed, and most youth grew up to have no jobs and no sustainable income. Many benefited from training programs and participated in NGO activities. But it is unclear what will they do next? There are no investments or opportunities in Wadi Khaled.’

Not much was mentioned in relation to aid dependency in regard to programming that targets people with disabilities. Most respondents claimed that not much has been done anyways except for some interventions that the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) implemented in the past few years. But no further information was relayed during the interviews and FGDs.

In conclusion, women, youth, and disabled individuals continue to be more vulnerable and at-risk in underprivileged and strained communities. They are also rarely taken into consideration in locally allocated budgets by municipalities who barely cover their infrastructure and waste management priorities and commitments. And while the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) should be the main governmental service provider of specialized programs for the most vulnerable, it is unclear what the capacity or budget of the ministry and other local NGOs will be after the crisis response funding. A lot remains to be anticipated, but little is being planned or strategized – at least on the local level, as research reveals.

## **Reactive vs. Proactive Modus Operandi: The lack of exit strategies**

One of the most consistent responses among all interviewees was confirming their belief that there is an absence of any exit strategy. At least

they have not been engaged in or heard of any discussions or planning to develop an exit strategy for donor funding. Municipalities, local and international NGOs, UN agencies, activists, and all other interviewees were very clear that they do not know of or think that any exit strategies actually exist in Lebanon. While everyone’s perception that humanitarian aid is gradually decreasing, and they are seeing more and more households taken off beneficiary lists, no one has been engaged in any efforts to plan for the ‘day after tomorrow,’ as one of the UN staff referred to the day when donor funding stops or the attention diverges to a different crisis.

The absence of exit strategies was perceived differently, though, depending on the respondent. In most cases, the blame or responsibility was put on a different party to initiate or lead that effort. For instance, municipalities mainly claimed that they lack the know-how to do such planning, plus they have no control over donor funding. ‘If we do not know when and whether this funding comes or stops, how can we plan properly for any exit strategy,’ said a mayor in Wadi Khaled. A similar stance was held by local NGOs and activists in both communities, even some INGO staff seemed unsure who was responsible to launch such a discussion and whether it is ‘safe’ or ‘politically correct’ to discuss this subject openly while some political parties are insisting on the return of Syrian refugees to Syria even before the political settlement happens. They believe that whenever the subject of developing exit strategies is declared, the public might start questioning whether ‘these organizations know something that they don’t know’ or it ‘seems like the international community decision of returning refugees to their homes has been taken.’

The extent to which this is good or bad, from a conflict sensitivity perspective, is not clear. Since one can actually argue that if the international community starts to take action related to planning for an exit-strategy, and although its impact might

be in the long run, it might positively contribute to the public perception, especially among those who question the international community's agenda or intentions in relation to the return of Syrian refugees. This might support the position of aid organizations and reduce some of the political and social pressure placed on them and on the central government.

Regardless of whether it is a sensitive topic or not, all respondents agreed on the importance of starting the conversation and planning for the future. It is a critical subject and there should be more awareness on the local, regional (the Arab League), and international community levels. Many respondents sceptical about the return of refugees to Syria anytime soon, in both Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel, stated that they believe the refugees hosted in their areas will be the last to return, if ever. 'As long as Hezbollah continues to occupy their villages in Qalamoun and Homs, how can we imagine that they will return?' asked one municipal member in Saadnayel. And he adds that 'one Lebanese construction and steel company is now occupying most of the houses in Qusayr for their workers in preparation for the reconstruction projects. So, it is highly unlikely that any of the villagers will go back there.' This perception resonated during several meetings in Wadi Khaled. The FGD participants, in particular, agreed 'that most of the refugees that Wadi Khaled hosts are from Qusayr and its surrounding villages in Homs Governorate which is witnessing a clear demographic change being orchestrated by pro-regime groups. Hence, refugees are not expected to be returning any time soon.' Another issue that was mentioned in Saadnayel was related to the Security Plan that was implemented in the Bekaa which led, according to key informants, thousands of wanted youth and men to flee to Syria and occupy empty villages in the Homs province, adding to the demographic shift of the area. Therefore, the whole discussion about a donor exit strategy seemed unrealistic for participants who linked it most importantly to the return of refugees.

None of the interviewees organically thought of a scenario that combines a donor seize of funding with a continued presence of refugees in Lebanon. Some, in fact, linked their return with a diversion of the donor aid to areas inside Syria. A couple of mayors and former mayors, among other interviewees, believe that Syrians will not return to Syria in significant numbers except if they find it more economically beneficial for them to return, undermining the security-related factors. They claim that the security situation in Syria nowadays is generally permissible for the vast majority to return, but 'as long as they are being supported and assisted in Lebanon by international donors, they are unlikely to return.' One of the interviewees, who is a strong champion of this assumption, is a political activist for one of the Lebanese political parties and claimed to already be heading a committee in his region tasked with the coordination of the refugees' return. He explained the process of coordinating with both the Lebanese General Security and other counterparts to register the names of those refugees willing to return. But he insisted that 'the biggest challenge to [his] work is the donor funding that comes to the refugees in Lebanon making their cost-benefit analysis always in preference of remaining. On the other hand, Lebanese entities (municipalities/NGOs) and individuals (primarily landlords) who encourage the Syrians to stay because they are benefiting from them.'

But Syrian refugees interviewed reiterated the difficulties and complexity of return, even though there is a wish among all of them to be back. Despite the fact that committees are being formed by various actors including Hezbollah, the Free Patriotic Movement, and others 'to facilitate return and register names for those who wish to do so,' as one key informant stated. 'But until now it is not being a very rewarding process. For instance, only two out of tens of families from the ISs follow up on registered.'

In conclusion, it was quite clear that no exit strategies have been developed or are underway,

at least in Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled. But there are local stakeholders who are aware of the importance of such an undertaking and are ready to engage in potential discussions. Some even offered to be part of any task force or roundtable meetings to strategize while senior staff at donor agencies advised that such consultations should be as widely inclusive as possible because of the multitude of considerations, sectors, actors, and variables that need to be taken into consideration during the process. Among these critical factors, interviewees mainly focused on the issues of leadership and sustainability with a focus on the environment.

## Exit Strategy Leadership Dilemma

‘We used to threaten some INGOs and donors that we will evict the refugees from our village if they do not provide us with proper support. This happened when our village population increased by more than three folds. We used to influence sometimes the funding decisions but on a very small scale and not the national strategies or ceilings. We had no say whatsoever about the latter and I don’t think any Lebanese community does.’ – former mayor from Wadi Khaled cluster

Almost all interviews reiterated that municipalities are not engaged with any preparations or plans for a soft landing. In fact, most municipal council members, both former and current, seemed largely reliant on the leadership of the international community in such a move. Ironically, there is a clear dependency on donors even when planning for decreasing aid dependency. Representatives of local authorities claim that they are not in a decision-making position when it comes to the frequency and scale of funding. Hence, the perception is that they cannot be leading the development of the exit strategy. But the common agreement between local authorities, activists, INGOs, and UN agencies is that municipal representatives, along with all other stakeholders, should be included in a consortium-like setup to

plan for that soft landing. A senior international organization staff member insists that the invitation to such a task should not be done by the international community but rather by the Lebanese government. Acknowledging how politicized this matter might be, he wondered ‘who on the central level will be the one calling for such a step? Whoever does it, it remains a must and should be done soon.’

The perception of activists and youth is different than that of local authority representatives in relation to who should be leading the exit strategy development. Their perception is that ‘governance at the local level lies in the hands of the mayor and sometimes another member or two of the council.’ Hence, mayors should be the ones calling for it and organizing the discussion around it. But they acknowledge that their representatives do not necessarily know or have the skill sets to develop the strategy. And when asked about the role of the central government in such an undertaking, the majority laughed and answered with statements like ‘Which government?’ and ‘Shouldn’t there be a government to start with?’ and ‘Since when does the central government care about our region?’

INGOs and UN agencies, contrary to youth and activists, see a critical and integral role for the central government to lead this effort. ‘Our strategy in the crisis response was always to engage the ministries and central government in the planning and strategizing. They co-lead with relevant UN agencies almost all the working groups. Therefore, it would just be normal and logical to do that when discussing the exit strategies,’ said a senior UN staff member. The INGOs and UN agencies developed a specific understanding of the context nationwide because of their close interaction with the different stakeholders, whether central government, municipalities, governmental sub-national entities and offices, local NGOs, and beneficiaries, both Syrian and Lebanese. This is something that most respondents acknowledge and respect. Some Lebanese respondents also think that ‘the

presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is covered or protected by the international community and therefore the latter will be responsible for changing their status or supporting them to return back home through diverting the funds into the reconstruction of Syria.'

There was a clear variation between the different stakeholders interviewed regarding the responsibilities and leadership of kick-starting the exit strategy planning. But on the other hand, there is an agreement that it will be a shared responsibility to develop it. In the meantime, and until a holistic and comprehensive exit strategy is launched, respondents pointed out a major component that should be integrated in the interventions of all donor agencies: sustainability. Some respondents discussed the hardships that municipalities and local NGOs face to sustain an activity after the life of donor-funded interventions, ending up either in dependency on aid to sustain the service or to a seize of functionality if that aid was not available. With sustainability also came a focus on the environmental impact of the refugee crisis, especially when it comes to the solid waste and wastewater management. Respondents mentioned these themes as the highest priorities because of their long-term and grave impact on health, livelihoods, and resources.

## Sustainability and Aid Dependency

Some key informants reported the prioritization of sustainability during the most recent and upcoming interventions that INGOs or international donors are planning, regardless of whether they are part of the discussion or planning for the exit strategy. One key staff member at a donor office stated that 'This period is witnessing a gradual shift from humanitarian to development funding.' He explained that 'This may be the reason leading to the perception that funding is on a decrease; because there might be more beneficiaries taken off the humanitarian aid lists. But the reality is that the current funding levels are higher but more

developmental in nature.' Development funding should not be mistaken as sustainable by default. Since sustainability needs to be intentionally embedded in the design of the interventions.

One of the hindrances to sustainable interventions is securing the funds to maintain operations. Mayors agree that the main source of their municipal funds should be the government, but that source can barely cover their basic services, such as solid waste collection, staff salaries, and a few other expenditures. In the absence of official numbers, respondents reported that the majority of municipalities spend more than 60–70% of their budgets on such expenses. Hence, if they depend solely on this source of funding, then they cannot be spending on any development projects, especially those that entail innovation or upgrade of services, such as solar energy. In fact, the mayors reported strong fears about the current political deadlock that is preventing the formation of the Lebanese cabinet. This, in turn, delays any payments that are due to their councils, which reflects badly on their commitments to vendors and suppliers on one hand and the development of new projects on the other hand. 'As of early 2019, we will not be able to even pay our staff,' added one mayor in Wadi Khaled. Such a deadlock, which is not unusual in Lebanon, provides another reason for the need for sustainable sources of funding for municipalities. Therefore, a donor funding exit strategy can help the municipalities on multiple fronts. According to one key informant, 'Some municipalities, albeit few, are thinking about some ideas to ensure permanent sources of income regardless of variables. For example, they can benefit from real estate rentals if they are able to own land or enmities. But most importantly we are seeing more municipalities already thinking about tax collection.'

Tax collection varies widely between Lebanese municipalities, as in the cases of Wadi Khaled cluster and Saadnayel, whereby some municipalities have no collection whatsoever and

others are able to collect around 50–60% taxes from households. Some respondents claimed that municipalities do not collect taxes because they do not want to be the first to start it, assuming that it will create public discontent and hence reduce their voter base. Others believed that these taxes, while placing a burden on their small remote local communities, will probably not make a huge difference in increasing the ability of municipalities to fund developmental projects like those currently supported by donors. The middle ground would be where certain tariffs enforced would support existing donor-funded services or projects to continue functioning after their withdrawal. This might include operating solid waste management facilities, wastewater treatment plants, generators, and many other types of projects. One concern raised by a UN senior staff member was that ‘Both donors and municipalities might not be considering depreciation and the expected operational lifetime of certain equipment or machinery received during this period. So even though aid dependency might have decreased a bit because of the recent support that a municipality received, but three to five or maximum ten years on, what will they do with depreciation? And will they be able to afford maintenance and repair costs? I don’t think they will have the money to replace overused machines.’ None of the other interviewees mentioned anything related to depreciation of machinery or such medium- to long-term financial and operational planning.

On the other hand, from a civil society and NGO perspective, the types of activities supported by donors ‘were not really aiming to build sustainability in most cases.’ Therefore, most activities will either stop entirely or decrease to a minimum when funding shrinks. For an NGO representative in Bekaa, ‘Nowadays a lot of livelihoods projects and job creation activities are supported but not the sustainable type. Trainings, trainings, and more trainings continue to be funded while I wonder how much the job market will absorb.’ She adds that ‘Proposals to support productive, long-

lasting, and sustainable enterprises or initiatives are not accepted, although it might cost the same amount as the trainings.’ The general perception among activists and key actors in NGOs who were interviewed is that the donors did not yet take the decision to invest in long-term developmental interventions that would create real jobs instead of temporary cash for work type. Some highlighted that, even within the same sectors that donors are funding cash for work activities, there can be more sustainable interventions that would secure jobs in the long run. ‘Our land is very fertile, but no one is investing properly in agriculture,’ said a Bekaa activist. ‘If we are allowed to hire Syrians in only three sectors—agriculture, construction, and waste management—why don’t we see these sectors really booming in the country? The answer is simply that activities are ad hoc and don’t aggregate or build sustainability.’

In fact, this remark was mentioned in both Saadnayel and Wadi Khaled where farmers and activists in both communities suggested transforming current burdens and competition over jobs into a clear and well-studied investment in agriculture to make proper use of existing resources. But any assessment or strategy to invest in the agriculture sector will need an in-depth assessment of the environmental impact of the refugee crisis.

## An Environmental Focus

Interviewees who acknowledged the need for an exit strategy, or at a minimum the need to kickstart the planning for one, advised that the environmental impact of the refugees’ protracted crisis response be taken into consideration. Some activists and key informants highlighted the need for an environmental assessment that would guide an environmental exit strategy. A common perception among these respondents was that the environmental issues rank second in terms of the impact of the crisis after the economic issues, mainly competition over jobs. For instance, one interviewee explained about ‘the dwindling

agricultural lands because of the ISs' which he considered 'has a two-tier negative impact, both economic on the agricultural sector and also environmental because of the damage to the soil that the ISs inflicted.' Other issues they highlighted included solid waste management and increased open air dumping and burning, and the impact of wastewater on natural water reservoirs and water sources, among other issues.

In Wadi Khaled for instance, most interviewees mentioned the various efforts of the international donor agencies and INGOs in responding to the increased strain on wastewater services by creating sewage networks which had never existed in most parts of the Wadi before. 'Unfortunately, these networks were not linked to a wastewater treatment plant as initially promised, although we bought the piece of land as a contribution from our side,' said one former mayor, 'but the treatment plant was never built hence all the wastewater of Wadi Khaled's refugees and Lebanese host community is now dumped into the river which turned black. There is no proper assessment to the environmental and economic impact of this disaster knowing that this river was one major source for irrigation; let alone the proliferation of mosquitos and terrible odours facing those living by the riverbed.'

In the absence of comprehensive environmental assessments of the overall crisis response activities implemented by different donors and INGOs in both Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel, and countrywide in general, it is hard to address the overall footprint on the environment. For instance, Saadnayel and the Bekaa region were known to have the best soil quality in Lebanon. For centuries, these lands used to be intensively used for agriculture to supply not only the Lebanese population, but way beyond. But lately, because of the burdens on the agriculture sector and exporting produce due to the Syrian war, it is no longer a profitable business. Hence, farmers and growers diverted the land usage to host ISs,

which might have irrevocable damage on the soil and agricultural infrastructure. Any exit strategy needs to take this into consideration and provide alternatives for these farmers if Syrians return or funding from rental fees come to an end.

## A Way Forward

Regardless of whether there are clear answers on who should lead the exit strategy formation or if donor aid is indeed decreasing – and the many other concerns put forward by interviewees – there is surely an consensus about the critical need to start moving forward on the discussion and development of an exit strategy. Any process to develop a national strategy and its action plan and regional strategies might take months, if not years, to be developed, especially if it will be supported by assessments and data that need time, resources, and access in order to be collected. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) platform is an equipped and inclusive sphere for hosting such an initiative, especially because it is led by the Lebanese government in coordination with UN agencies and international donors.

- One solution for the leadership dilemma would be to host the exit strategy task force or discussions under the umbrella of the LCRP. Ministries, local authorities, embassies, NGOs, and other concerned stakeholders can then assign special liaisons or focal points to take part in this consultation and planning meetings. Eventually, the process should include all key stakeholders.
- Resources need to be allocated for the development of the exit strategy by international donors in collaboration, or at least in coordination, with relevant governmental counterparts who should provide access and facilitation, if not material support.
- Ministries and their regional offices, along with municipalities and other official entities, need to be very much engaged, trained, and

positioned to be handed critical services that are currently being implemented by international donors. One such example is the UKDFID-funded MOSA social workers' training which is being implemented by the UNDP peacebuilding program. This training aims at building the capacity of MOSA employees to be handed the development of Mechanisms for Social Stability in their regions and continue after the current funding alters. This capacity should allow the SDCs to host and launch stabilization initiatives in the near future.

- Livelihoods programming should focus on sustainable interventions, rather than just building technical skills through vocation training or other types of trainings. Sustainability might be introduced through social entrepreneurship, innovation, eco-tourism, specialized agri-businesses, and supporting the penetration of new foreign markets, etc. Any activities targeting employability or labour force expansion should take into consideration the structural barriers as well as specific market needs.
- Municipalities, governmental and quasi-governmental entities, such as the Water Establishments or EDL contractors, and others should be supported to enhance their tariff collection processes. New tariffs or an enhanced mechanism for collection, such as meters, can be introduced whenever needed as long as they are coupled with enhanced services. This will ensure a certain level of funding to sustain a minimum level of services and technical follow up.
- PPP (Public Private Partnerships) should be encouraged but also started during this period, benefiting from the technical assistance that may be funded or provided by donors to get this model up and working.
- Promote collective work or partnerships among donors and INGOs to complement

each other's work in the field and enhance value chains in both services and livelihoods. For instance, the solid waste management interventions can be supported holistically in municipalities that are willing to take on specific tasks such as long-term awareness and staffing for operations. In that case, various donors can divide components of the solid waste management value chain between themselves to cover trucks, bins, hangars, sorting and related machinery, awareness, technical assistance, and other tasks. At the exit strategy phase, more complementarity and gap filling will be needed to ensure systems are operational and do not continue funding sources to keep running.

- Enhancing livelihoods and alleviating damages on the environment are considered utmost priorities. Hence, the exit strategy needs to focus specifically on these sectors to dwell more on them and the options to enhance them.
- Effort should be made where trust in the municipality is not high and the perception is that it is unreliable or not legitimate to better understand the dynamics and try to develop a right fit for interventions.
- Very clear, smart, and widespread communications plan and materials should be put in place at the launching of discussions around the exit strategy.
- Women, youth, and individuals with disabilities need to be represented in any exit strategy committee since they are among the most vulnerable and at-risk. Hence, any such strategy should prioritize them and cater to their needs.

## Annexes

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#### Annex 2. List of LHSP projects in Wadi Khaled and Saadnayel

North	Al Fared	Provision of agricultural equipment to Al Fared	The project consisted of the provision of a tractor to the municipality.	2015/2016	Completed
North	Al Fared	Setting up the medical room of Al Fared Public School	Furnished the medical room in Al Fared Public School	2014	Completed
North	Al Fared	Setting up the medical room of Nabih Al Awadeh Public School	Furnished the medical room in Nabih Al Awadeh Public School	2014	Completed
North	Al Fared	Setting up the medical room of Al Awadeh Public School	Furnished the medical room in Al Awadeh Public School	2014	Completed
North	Al Fared	Improving the wastewater network in Al Fared	Completed about 2km of the internal sewerage and installed the needed manholes	2014/2015	Completed
North	Al Fared	Setting up the medical room of Baraem Al Mustakbal Public School	Furnished the medical room in Baraem Al Mustakbal Public School	2014	Completed
North	Al Fared	Provision of a skid steer loader equipped with a sweeper to Al Fared municipality	Supplied Al Fared municipality with a skid steer loader equipped with a sweeper to strengthen the municipal capacities in conducting public infrastructure maintenance works and public street cleaning on regular basis	2015/2016	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Setting up the medical room of Al Hisheh Public school	Furnished the medical room in Al Hisheh Public school	2014	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Support Wadi Khaled Public Technical Institute by building and equipping a new department	Supported the Wadi Khaled Public Technical Institute in Hisheh through providing equipment for the car mechanics department, equipment for the “cooling and heating” department, a generator, a training to the teachers on the provided equipment, graduates with a starting Kit as an incentive and the construction of a facility to host the car mechanics/cooling and heating department on the 780 m2 area.	2015/2016	Completed

North	Al Hisheh	Rehabilitation of Al Hisheh Technical Institute- Car mechanics / cooling and heating department	Rehabilitated the existing building for the Car Mechanics, cooling, and heating department. The rehabilitation was required for the building to become operational.	2017	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Rehabilitation of irrigation canals in Al Hisheh	Rehabilitated 1600m of the irrigation canal	2014/2015	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Construction of three agricultural roads in Al Hisheh	Constructed agricultural roads by digging the soil and rocks, levelling the road and placing a compacted base coarse layer	2015/2016	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Improving the wastewater network in Al Hisheh	Installed the secondary network, through which the municipality insured the protection of the environment	2014/2015	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Supporting the services of Al Makassed Association Primary Health Care Center	Provided materials Al Makassed Association Primary Health Care Center	2014/2015	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Supporting the services of Al Makassed Association Primary Health Care Center	Provided an ultrasound machine and a mini-bus	2014/2015	Completed
North	Al Hisheh	Provision of a skid steer loader equipped with a sweeper to Al Hisheh municipality	The project will supply Al Hisheh municipality with a skid steer loader equipped with a sweeper to strengthen the municipal capacities in conducting public infrastructure maintenance works and public street cleaning on regular basis	2015/2016	Completed
North	Al Moqaybleh	Setting up the medical room of Al Bekeia'a Public school	Furnishing the medical room in Al Bekeia'a Public school	2014	Completed
North	Al Moqaybleh	Setting up the medical room of Al Moqaybleh Public school	Furnished the medical room in Al Moqaybleh Public school	2014	Completed
North	Al Rama	Setting up the medical room of Al Rama Wadi Khaled Public School	Furnished the medical room in Al Rama Wadi Khaled Public School	2014	Completed
North	Al Rama	Rehabilitation of agriculture roads in Al Rama	Rehabilitated agricultural roads in Al Rama. 5 roads are rehabilitated	2014	Completed
North	Al Rama	Construction of three agricultural roads in Al Rama	Supplied agricultural roads by digging soil, rocks and leveling the road through placing a compacted base layer in the following areas.	2015/2016	Completed
North	Al Rama	Setting up the medical room of Rajem Hussein Public School	Furnished the medical room in Rajem Hussein Public School	2014	Completed

North	Amayer	Enhance wastewater management (b)	Rehabilitated the road after the sewage network installation in Amayer Wadi Khaled (Phase II): Excavating and cleaning, Covering the road with basecourse (15cm) and compaction force	2013/2014	Completed
North	Amayer	Setting up the medical room of Kfarzena Public School	Furnished the medical room in Al Amayer Public School	2014	Completed
North	Amayer	Improving the productivity of agriculture through the rehabilitation of irrigation canals	Conveyed the irrigation water from the existing canals to avoid irrigation activity breakdown	2015	Completed
North	Amayer	Improving the liquid and solid waste management system in Amayer	Connected Rajm Issa (220 housing units) to the sewage network (2071m); Training local authorities and community actors on the protection and maintenance of the system	2014/2015	Completed
North	Amayer	Rehabilitation and extension of an agricultural road in Amayer/Rajm Issa	Rehabilitated 300m of the agricultural road that is not accessible for trucks and vehicles, the construction of the remaining 1,308 m of agricultural road.	2015/2016	Completed
North	Amayer	Setting up the medical room of Rajem Issa Public School	Furnished the medical room in Rajem Issa Public School	2014	Completed
North	Amayer	Provision of a skid steer loader equipped with a sweeper to Amayer municipality	Supplied Amayer municipality with a skid steer loader equipped with a sweeper to strengthen the municipal capacities in conducting public infrastructure maintenance works and public street cleaning on regular basis	2015/2016	Completed
North	Amayer	Improving the productivity of agriculture through the rehabilitation of irrigation canals	Conveyed the irrigation water from the existing canals to avoid irrigation activity breakdown	2014	Completed
North	Bani Sakher	Setting up the medical room of Banisakher Elementary Public School	Furnished the medical room in Bani Sakher Elementary Public School	2014	Completed
North	Bani Sakher	Rehabilitation of irrigation canals in Bani Sakher	Rehabilitated a canal of 1300 meter length, leading water from Ayn Al Teen Spring, irrigating 100 hectares; Rehabilitated a canal of 900-meter length irrigating 70 hectares	2014/2015	Completed
North	Khat El Petrol	Setting up the medical room of Khat El Petrol Public School	Furnished the medical room in Khat El Petrol Public School	2014	Completed
North	Bani Sakher	Provision of LED public lighting to Bani Sakher	Installed 50 LED lighting posts on the main road from Boqay'a to Bani Sakher.	2015	Completed

North	Bani Sakher	Rehabilitation of irrigation canals and provision of maintenance equipment to Bani Sakher	Constructed a section of the irrigation canal linking the existing irrigation system. Installed 64m of culvert to cover the open canals in front of the houses	2015/2016	Completed
North	Khat El Petrol	Improve hygiene conditions in Khat El Petrol through the strengthening of the liquid waste management system	Installed the main pipe of the sewage system for 150 residential units, (approx. 4 km)	2014/2015	Completed
North	Khat El Petrol	Provision of a backhoe and a skid steer loader to the municipality of Khat El Petrol	Provided a backhoe loader to the municipality of Khat El Petrol. It will be used to perform periodic maintenance along the "Naher el Kabir" river	2015/2016	Completed
North	Moqaibleh	Improve access to sport activities through the rehabilitation of a mini football playground	Rehabilitated a mini football playground for youth in Moqaibleh,	2014	Completed
North	Moqaibleh	Improving the wastewater network in Al Moqaibleh	Installed the main and secondary sewage networks in the 4 main quarters of the village	2014/2015	Completed
North	Moqaibleh	Provision of a backhoe loader to Moqaibleh municipality	Supplied Moqaibleh municipality with a backhoe loader to strengthen the municipal capacities in conducting public infrastructure maintenance works.	2015/2016	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Setting up the medical room of Rajem Khalef Public School	Furnished the medical room in Rajem Khalef Public School	2014	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Setting up the medical room of Al Karha Public School	Furnished the medical room in Al Karha Public School	2014	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Setting up the medical room of Al Knaisch Wadi Khaled Public School	Furnished the medical room in Al Knaisch Wadi Khaled Public School	2014	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Ensuring proper hygiene and health conditions in Wadi Khaled	Connected Rajm Hussein village to Amayer main sewage pipeline (2 km)	2014/2015	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Ensuring proper hygiene and health conditions in Wadi Khaled	Connected Rajem Khalaf to the main sewage pipeline in Amayer (about 1.8 km)	2014/2015	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Setting up the medical room of Bahia Al Harriri - Al Majdel Public School	Furnished the medical room in Bahia Al Harriri - Al Majdel Public School	2014	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Setting up the medical room of Heneidar (Mixed) Public School	Furnished the medical room in Heneidar (Mixed) Public School	2014	Completed

North	Wadi Khaled	Provision of a backhoe loader and a skid steer with sweeper to Wadi Khaled Municipality	Provided a backhoe loader to the municipality of Wadi Khaled with the purpose of reducing the cost of the infrastructure maintenance in eight villages as well as the rehabilitation of retention walls and other tasks related to the infrastructure upgrade.	2015/2016	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Setting up the medical room of Rajem Khalef Al Kalkha Public School	Furnished the medical room in Rajem Khalef Al Kalkha Public School	2014	Completed
North	Wadi Khaled	Enhancing the income opportunities in the most excluded rural area of Wadi Khaled district	Built an 800m irrigation canal in Wadi Khaled	2014	Completed
Bekaa	Saadnayel	Promoting social cohesion through the construction of sport facilities for youth in Saadnayel	Established a Football and Basketball Playground;	2014/2015	Completed
Bekaa	Saadnayel	Improving the wastewater network in Saadnayel	Constructed sewage networks of 2880m for 8 locations in Saadnayel	2014/2015	Completed
Bekaa	Saadnayel	Enhancing the transportation system and the road network in Saadnayel	Rehabilitated 2 bridges in Saadnayel	2014/2015	Completed
Bekaa	Saadnayel	Provision of equipment for wastewater services in Saadnayel	Supplied a septic truck with pressure functions to ensure continuous services for opening the closed wastewater networks.	2015/2016	Completed
Bekaa	Saadnayel	Construction of a drainage canal and rehabilitation of agricultural roads in Saadnayel	Rehabilitated agricultural roads (2,050m) and the constructed a drainage canal to improve water management and benefit from the rainwater for irrigation purposes.	2015/2016	Completed

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The UNDP "Peace Building in Lebanon" project

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