

# 2022 Impact Survey Results:

## Understanding the impact of Lebanon's Socio-Economic Crisis on Protection Programming

November 2022

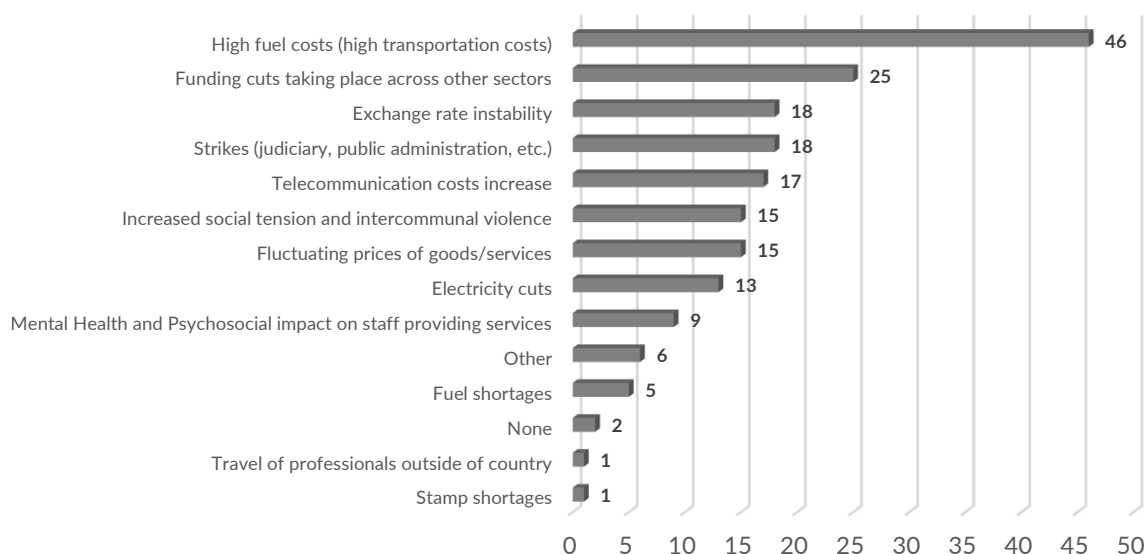
### Introduction

Since 2019, Lebanon has faced an unprecedented and multifaceted economic, financial, political and health crisis. Increases in socio-economic needs, particularly for the populations supported under the LCRP are forcing families to cut back on expenditures related to food, healthcare, education, employment, and other basic services. Soaring inflation over the past two years, in addition to currency devaluation and lack of government stability are compounding the already dismal economic situation in Lebanon.

The impacts of the socio-economic crisis of this magnitude are far-reaching. Increasing costs of fuel and mobile phone bills are compromising the mobility and communication abilities of lower income households. From a protection standpoint, the number of people in need of employment, adequate housing, and basic needs, are increasing, along with safety and security concerns resulting from social tension, crime and reduced law enforcement due to the increasing lack of financial resources.

The following report provides an overview and assessment of an Inter-Agency Protection Sector survey that sought to identify how these developments are impacting the ability of protection partners to deliver quality and timely protection services to refugees, migrants and members of the host community, which individuals are struggling to access services and why. It also serves to identify potential points of further support that can be provided to at-risk individuals and local partners providing protection services by the protection sector itself and other stakeholders.

### Factors most impacting the ability to provide protection services

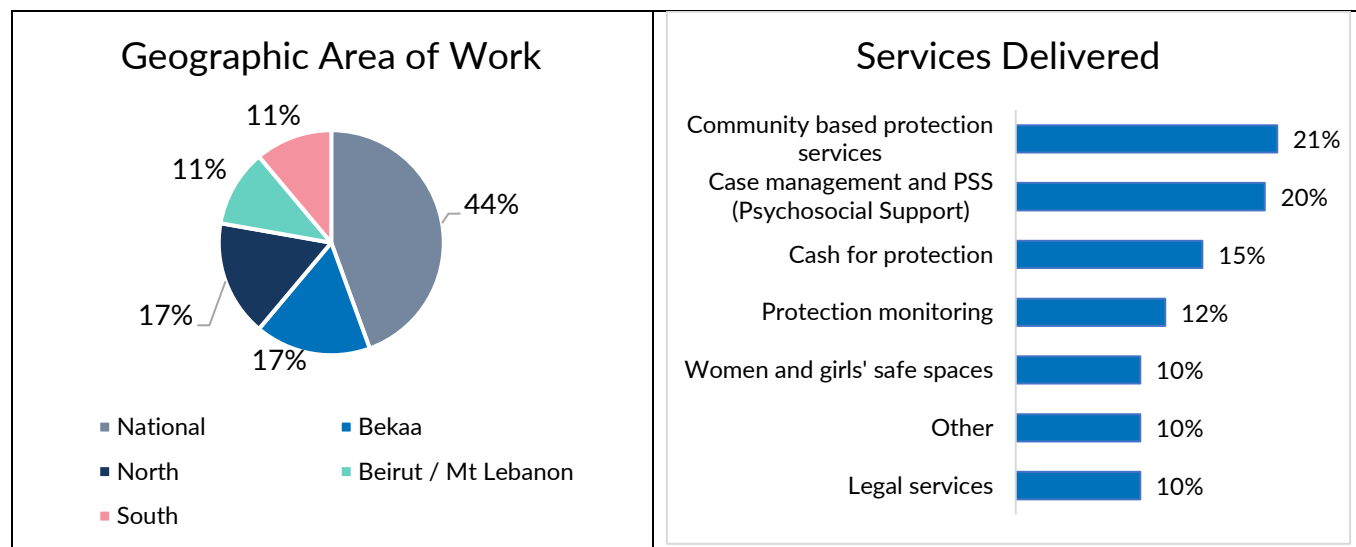


Note: Mentioned under "other" – Accessing Bank services

Votes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level of factors were summarized and weighted to derive this ranking

## Methods

This Impact Survey was launched by the Protection Sector in October to better understand how important events and emerging crises are impacting the ability of protection partners to meet the critical needs of persons at heightened risk. The survey results have been used to inform the LCRP planning process and will be drawn on by the sector to update the annual workplan 2023 and to develop key priority areas for coordination. This year, there were 33 UN agencies and NGOs (international/national) implementing programs relating to protection, child protection (CP) and gender-based violence (GBV) which participated. Of the 10 national NGOs, all were either women-led, youth-led or disability-led. The majority of respondents were heads of protection programs at their organizations.



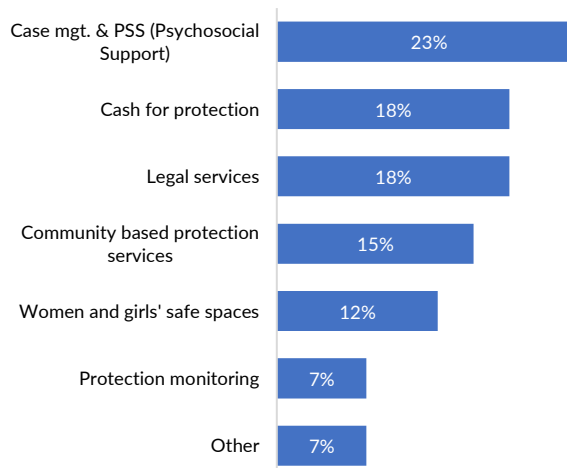
## Key Findings

### Impact on Services:

Case management and Psychosocial support (PSS) is the service most referenced as being affected by the crisis, followed by cash for protection and legal services. High fuel costs, followed by funding cuts in other sectors, and exchange rate instability were the most cited factors impacting the ability to provide protection services. High fuel costs are preventing organizations from reaching those in need, and also preventing those in need from going to seek services in-person.

The most cited impacts to services resulting from adaptation efforts are lower participation due to individuals having difficulty reaching services, increased operational programming costs, difficulties managing budgets and difficulty maintaining contact with individuals.

### Services most affected:



## Case Management

High fuel, phone and internet costs along with reduced options for referral of cases to other sector services and an increased impact on staff mental health and psychosocial wellbeing were cited as the factors most impacting the delivery and quality of case management services. Crucially partners reported that cases are now even more reliant on humanitarian protection services since the socio-economic crisis but that it is more difficult for case workers to actually reach and support high risk cases due to these barriers and that these barriers are impacting on program quality.

## Community-Based Protection

The factors most inhibiting provision of CBP activities were reported as high transportation costs leading to lower participation and telecommunication costs making it more difficult for partners to reach community focal points and for them to reach and support community members. Individuals prioritizing access to essential services such as health care and electricity shortages were also cited by partners as impacting factors.

## Legal Counselling, Assistance and Representation

Judicial strikes are identified as the factor most negatively impacting the provision of legal counselling, assistance and representation services, closely followed by administrative strikes in public institutions in particular in the Personal Status Department, high transportation costs and stamp shortages. The type of counselling and legal aid services most impacted were reported as civil documentation, legal residency, housing land and property and support for detainees in particular in the Bekaa/Baalbeck-Hermel, North and Akkar governorates.

Legal actors report having to postpone court hearings, protracted and paused judicial processes for sensitive GBV, juveniles and stateless cases because of judicial strikes, further pre-trial delays for detainees, receiving a high number of rental disputes for which negotiations are becoming more challenging as property owners are less willing to compromise and being unable to submit protection orders for children in contact with the law and GBV survivors.

Stamps are critical for the processing of civil documentation. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for printing stamps of which come in a variety of prices (1000 LBP, 5000 LBP, 10,000 LBP). These steps are necessary to proceed with birth and marriage registration cases. As a result of a shortage of stamps being produced the price of stamps have increased on the black market. The purchasing of stamps on the black market is not encouraged as it leads to inflation of stamp costs for individuals.

## Impact on Beneficiaries:

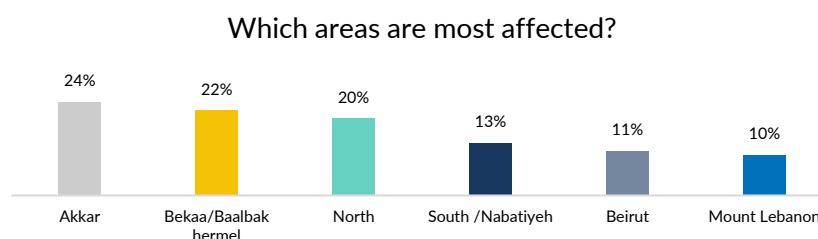
People living with a disability were the group cited most as being most impacted by external factors in their ability to access and use protection services with women being a close second, and older persons and children third.

People living with disabilities are described as facing heightened access barriers to protection services as they tend to have higher expenditures for health and shelter to meet basic needs and face challenges accessing income-generating opportunities. Specifically, they are impacted due to electricity cuts and increasing telecommunications costs, while caregivers are reported to be overwhelmed due to a combination of financial hardship and the limited market availability of assistive materials and medical

*“Those living with disabilities are being marginalized as their protection needs are increasingly deprioritized over competing basic needs. They are becoming invisible and harder to reach”* NGO worker

services. These challenges are also reportedly similar for older persons who have disabilities and/or chronic illness. Older persons and persons with disability without social support are perceived as especially at risk of neglect and deprivation. Women headed households are suffering from debt-related stressors resulting from increased rent, fuel, and food costs which is leading some to negative coping strategies. Such stressors are leading to increasing domestic violence which poses a higher risk to both women and children who are often dependent on their abuser for their basic needs. Whereas men are facing increasing pressure to provide for their families, women are seeking work more to combat socioeconomic hardship. Children are experiencing higher than average drop-out rates from school so they can work to support their families, or due to high transportation and associated costs to get to school. Children are at increased risk of neglect, child marriage and exploitation, and face many problems accessing public services in the future because administrative strikes and backlogs make registering newborns difficult.

In descending order, respondents said the most affected areas are Akkar, Bekka/Baalbak Hermel and North Lebanon.



### Impact on humanitarian protection staff

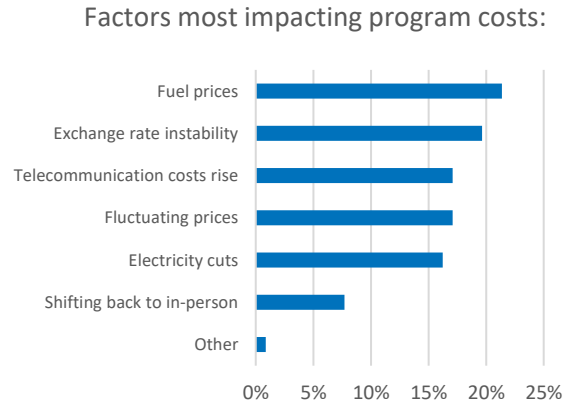
24/33 respondents indicated they feel that their own safety and that of their colleagues is impacted by the current situation and many employees providing protection services said they are suffering from the impacts of the deteriorating conditions themselves. Staff reported fear of being robbed when returning home from work since they are paid in USD salary, protection case workers have experienced threats with no measures taken by police, and a few said they have been hospitalized due to injury caused by violent individuals. Reduced morale is compromising the work performance of employees of protection service providers. Respondents recommend that organizations prioritize psychological support for front-line workers and increase team-bonding efforts as a means of improving the sense of support in the workplace.

*“Beneficiaries are becoming more aggressive and approaching the centers in an aggressive way. Staff are afraid to protect themselves.”*

Of the international NGOs, 15/18 report having access to psychosocial support provided by their organization available for staff, while this is only reported by 3/10 of the national NGOs. National NGOs say they have the intention to provide this support for staff but do not have available resources.

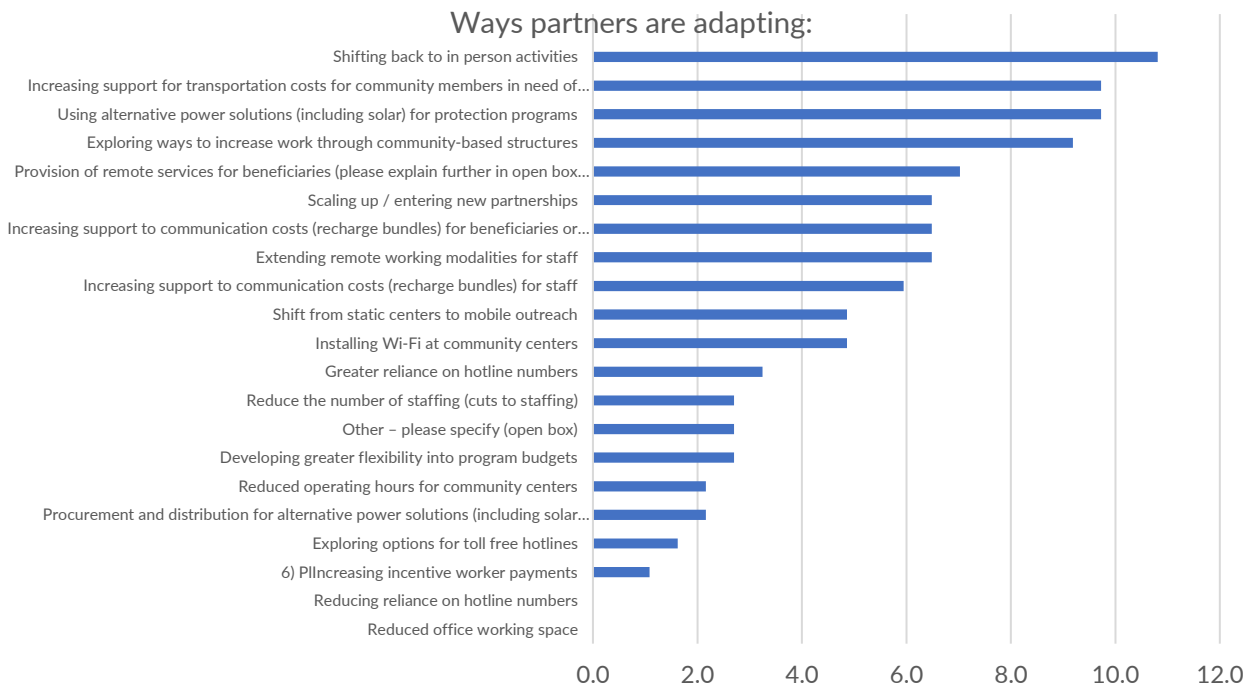
## Impact on programming costs

99% of partners reported that the socio-economic crisis has increased protection programming costs with the majority reporting that costs have increased by 20-50%.



## How are service providers adapting?

Most organizations indicated they are (20) shifting back in in-person activities, (18) using alternative power solutions (including solar) for protection programs, (17) exploring ways to increase work through community-based structures as a measure to adapt to the socio-economic crisis, as well as increasing support for transportation costs for community members in need of assistance and incentive workers or volunteers (18). Organizations cite using their community-based organizations in order to implement activities inside the community while avoiding transportation and telecommunication costs. Organizations have cited using new strategies to reach hard-to-reach beneficiaries in rural areas such as mobile legal clinics.



The predominant way that case management services providers have adapted is by providing communication and transportation support costs for cases, installing alternative power solutions in centers and shifting back to in-person activities. While for community-based protection, service providers have adapted to challenges by using alternative power solutions (including solar) for

community centers, shifting to in-person activities, installing wi-fi routers in community centers, provision of transportation support to community members and shifting from a static center to a mobile outreach model. 5% of partners said they had closed projects as a result of the impact of the crisis.

Legal actors report maintaining remote legal counselling services, increasing transportation support costs and shifting from static legal aid desks to mobile clinics. To get around hold ups in legal assistance and representation due to the judicial and administrative strike, partners are sequencing activities for example focusing on legal outreach and counselling. In response to stamp shortages, partners are using stamps which are more available in the market (i.e., 5000 LBP is more common than 1000LBP). This means partners are accumulating cases for processing to pay in bulk using larger stamp values. However, some partner adaption methods may not be without consequences for example partners report paying extra to buy stamps on the black market which risks driving up stamp prices and a number of partners reported needing to resort to personal relationships with court and public officials to fast-track urgent cases and to get advance notice of judicial opening days in order to prepare files.

## Recommendations

### Donors

- Allow for scaled up operational costs for protection programming factoring in greater expenditure on **transportation and connectivity/telecommunication costs** in budgeting, as these are essential to overcoming barriers to service access.
- **Funding complementary and multi-sectoral packages** of assistance and ensuring referral pathways are in place is crucial to achieving protection outcomes for cases especially for health, education, shelter, basic assistance, food and livelihoods sectors.
- Allow for **budget flexibility** for partners to improve the organization's ability to adapt in accordance with the changing crisis context
- **Maintain financial support for local NGO/CSOs** as they play a critical role in providing protection services in communities and have been dramatically impacted by the socio-economic crisis. Financial losses to these agencies will result in programming gaps.
- **Maintain case management capacity** (including specialized rehabilitation services and quality assistive devices for persons with disabilities and older persons), as the decreasing economic situation is resulting in increased case management needs including to address child protection and gender-based violence concerns.
- **Maintain current levels of institutional support to public institutions and courts** to continue processing of legal cases and procedures. Forms of support suggested including stationary, printing materials and solar power systems.

### Protection Sector

- Encourage **additional reasonable accommodations to be made by partners** to ensure the inclusion of people who face extra public transportation barriers such as living in hard-to-reach areas, persons with disabilities and older persons to services
- There should be a collective effort by heads of agencies to maintain advocacy with the Ministry of Telecommunication and telecom companies to establish **toll-free hotlines**. Regular and transparent communication should be channeled to sector partners in this regard.
- Coordinate between partners to achieve a **unified approach to transportation and communication support costs** based on good practices and lessons learnt in 2022

- Develop a **sector-specific risk-matrix** in response to key external factors capturing mitigation measures already being employed and suggested by partners.
- Improve the prioritization of protection programming by strengthening the protection analysis to result in **enhanced case management prioritization** for those most at-risk, including marginalized groups such as persons living with disability.
- Maintain efforts to **ensure an up-to-date service mapping** across sectors to facilitate timely and accurate referrals
- Encourage organizations to **arrange security trainings** for staff
- The Protection Sector in particular legal actors and donors should **advocate with the Ministry of Finance to increase stamps** in circulation to create more transparency over the printing and distribution of stamps and to implement e-stamps recognized by Lebanese Law.
- **Advocacy must be maintained by legal actors to resolve and/or facilitate the processing of cases through formal pathways and to be able to fast-track critical cases for judicial procedures** (i.e., domestic violence, child custody cases). during the judicial strike based on shared partner good practices.