



# 2023 ANNUAL SECTOR DASHBOARD

## Protection including Child Protection and GBV

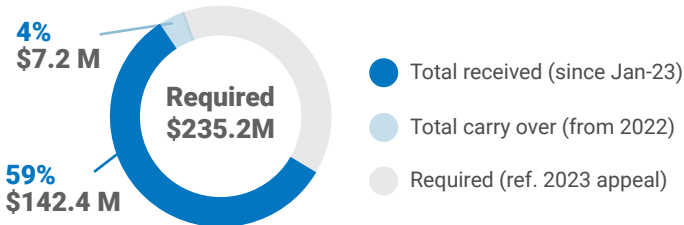


Inter-Agency  
Coordination  
Lebanon

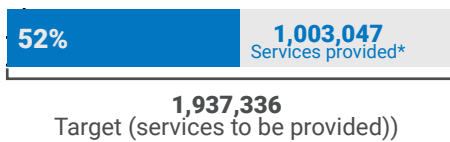
This dashboard summarizes progress made by partners involved in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) and highlights trends affecting people in need. The Protection sector in Lebanon aims to achieve the following results: OUTCOME 1: Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity have their fundamental rights respected and access to an effective justice and protection system ; OUTCOME 2: Women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity are safe, empowered and supported in their communities ; OUTCOME 3: Women, girls, men and boys in all their diversity live with dignity and are resilient to shocks.

### 2023 Sector Funding Status

As of 31 December 2023



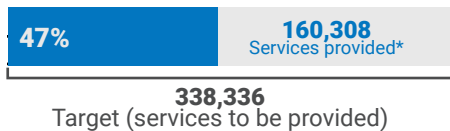
### 2023 population reached



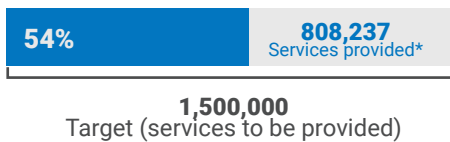
#### 2023 population figures by cohort



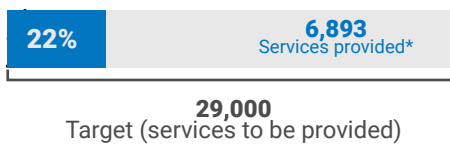
1,216,278  
Lebanese individuals  
in need



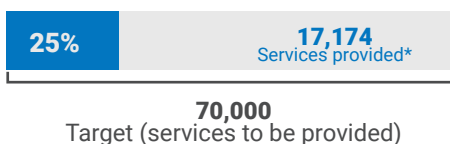
1,500,000  
Displaced Syrians  
in need



29,000  
Palestinian Refugees  
from Syria in need



180,000  
Palestine Refugees  
in Lebanon in need



\*To be noted that one person can benefit from several services, and this includes another 10,435 migrants and other nationalities.

### Progress Against Targets

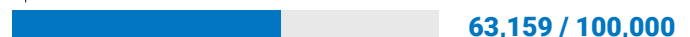
Key Achievements

#### Protection

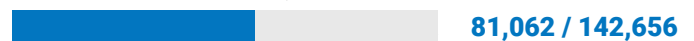
# of persons who benefitted from counseling, legal assistance, and legal representation regarding legal stay.



# of households who benefitted from counseling, legal assistance, and legal representation regarding civil registration including birth registration, marriage, divorce and death



# of unique persons participating in community centers and SDCs (includes mobile activities done outside the center)



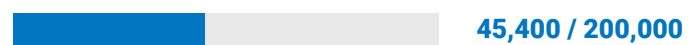
# of persons receiving protection case management (PCM).



# of persons with disability and older persons receiving individual specialized rehabilitation support.

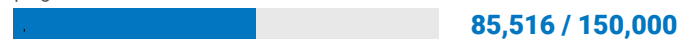


# of children and adults reached through awareness raising activities and community mobilisation interventions on PSEA. <sup>2</sup>

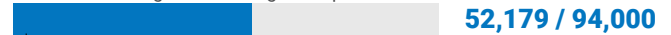


#### Gender-Based Violence

# of women, girls, men and boys who participate in targeted gender equality and empowerment activities in safe spaces or at community level as part of GBV prevention programs

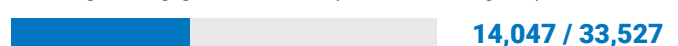


# of women and girls accessing safe spaces



#### Child Protection

# of caregivers engaged in activities to promote well-being and protection of children



# of girls and boys and caregivers receiving specialized/focused psychosocial support<sup>1</sup>



# of girls, boys engaged in community-based Child Protection activities



<sup>1</sup> Children receiving more than one service may be counted more than once

<sup>2</sup> This is a cross cutting indicator, includes Child Protection & Gender-Based Violence

### Partners

61 contributing partners: ABAAD, ACTED, AMEL, AND, ARCPA, Borderless, CARE, Caritas Lebanon, CESVI, CLDH, CONCERN, COOPI, DRC, HAND, Handicap International, HelpAge, Himaya, I m possible, Imam Sadr Foundation, IMC, Intersos, IOCC Lebanon, IRC, JRS, KAFA, Key of Life, LAW, LECORVAW, LOST, Magna Lebanon, Makhzoumi, MECC, Michel Daher Social Foundation - MDSF, Mouvement Social, Nabad, Near East Foundation, NRC, OXFAM, Plan International, PU-AMI, Rahma Association, RDFL, RI, RMF, SAWA Group, SCI, SFCG, SHEILD, SIF, Tabitha-Dorcas, TdH-It, TdH-L, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNRWA, UPEL, WCH, WRF, WVI, YNCA

For more information, please contact:  
lebbeia@unhcr.org



## MULTI-SECTORAL SITUATION UPDATE

In 2023, Lebanon faced a deteriorating protection space for refugees, migrants, and vulnerable populations, influenced by socio-economic challenges, political uncertainty, and regional conflicts. The collapse of the banking sector, currency deflation, and limited access to social security networks have worsened the country's economic situation. Escalating tensions between local communities and refugees, particularly displaced Syrians, are exacerbated by strained resources, leading to anti-refugee rhetoric, restrictive policies, and increased municipal restrictions. This has resulted in a decline in the protection space, with security forces conducting raids and implementing stricter measures, leading to detentions and deportations.

Public institutions, grappling with frequent electricity shortages, increased prices, and political instability, face challenges in providing essential services and upholding basic rights. The lack of decision-making ability in the parliament contributes to reduced trust in national systems. Ongoing conflicts, such as those at the Southern border and within Palestinian camps, further strain resources and escalate security concerns. Displacement, both within and beyond the South, presents protection risks, particularly for women and children, with increased vulnerability to physical and emotional harm, limited access to shelter, and challenges in meeting basic needs.

The escalating conflicts have prompted the displacement of over 80,000 people, exacerbating the country's security situation. Onward movements, including risky sea journeys, continue, highlighting the shrinking protection space and limited opportunities for vulnerable groups. Vulnerable households resort to harmful coping mechanisms, such as debt accumulation, child labor, and exploitative practices, further compromising their safety and well-being.

The challenges extend to legal and administrative aspects,

impacting the ability of refugees and vulnerable groups to access basic rights. Obtaining legal residency becomes challenging, with only a fraction possessing legal residency, and increased security measures result in self-imposed movement restrictions and heightened insecurity. Limited access to civil status documentation poses risks of statelessness and affects legal protection.

Access to justice is hindered by strikes, delays, and high costs, with overcrowded prisons exacerbating challenges for detainees. Survivors of gender-based violence, victims of trafficking, and vulnerable groups struggle to access legal remedies, contributing to underreporting and fear of seeking justice.

Community resilience and intra- and inter-community engagement decline due to socio-economic and political crises. Traditional gender norms and patriarchal structures impact the rights and agency of women and girls. Vulnerable groups, including older persons, those with disabilities, and single females caring for children, face heightened protection issues.

The shrinking protection space results in heightened feelings of insecurity, with reports of safety concerns, including harassment, threats, and kidnapping. Harmful coping mechanisms, such as debt accumulation and child labor, become prevalent. Child labor rates increase significantly, and incidents of gender-based violence and child abuse have devastating consequences, with underreporting as a persistent challenge.

In conclusion, Lebanon's protection space is shrinking, impacting refugees, migrants, and vulnerable populations. The multifaceted challenges require comprehensive and targeted responses to address the diverse needs of affected communities, safeguarding public health, and ensuring well-being amidst the complex crises facing the nation.

## 1. ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SECTOR AT THE OUTPUT LEVEL

In 2023, through three dedicated outcomes areas, the Protection Sector reached a total of **1,003,0047, persons** with protection interventions including legal services and advocacy. 2023 witnessed a significant increase in restrictive measures and access restrictions mainly applying to Syrians displaced in Lebanon coupled with an increasingly negative perception of displaced Syrians. For Lebanese the deflation of the Lebanese currency has increased challenges in securing livelihoods. Persons across populations facing protection risks continued to face access challenges to national legal protection systems given the limited financial and resource constraints of the administrative, municipal and judicial structures.

The last quarter of 2023 was **heavily overshadowed and impacted by the developments in the neighboring countries as well as the related hostilities in the South of the country.** Following the deflation of the Lebanese currency and the subsequent dollarization of items, the escalation in the South has yet again strained the countries' ability to cope and recover from previous crises. The conflict along the Blue Line is characterized by increasing and daily exchange of fire between conflicting parties and has resulted in the displacement of over 70,000 persons up until the end of 2023<sup>1</sup>. Most affected areas of conflict include Bint Jbeil, Marjaayoun, Nabatieh, Hasbaya, and Tyre Areas of displacement movements include mainly Tyre, Nabatieh, and Saida. Most displaced persons

have moved within the Southern districts either renting, are hosted by communities (in private accommodation, with relatives, or other spaces) and a small fraction resides in temporary

collective shelters. The Lebanese Red Cross, DRR, and DRM reported and facilitated 13 collective shelters in South and Nabatieh governorates. Beyond the South, some people continue to relocate into Bekaa, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and Northern Lebanon, while pendular or secondary movement persists. Limited abilities and means to move elsewhere have forced some to remain in or return to unsafe areas.

**The hostilities, coupled with the displacement, have further exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and socio-economic constraints and contributed to a significant deterioration of the well-being of affected population groups, particularly of children, young and single women, persons living with disabilities or older persons without support.** The escalation of hostilities and interaction with civilians further northward from the border has increased the risk of civilian harm including through unexploded explosive ordinances, requiring significant protection, mental health and psychosocial support as well as other specialized support. Those remaining or returning to affected and unsafe border areas, face significant challenges in accessing humanitarian assistance and services, while referrals of individuals with specific needs such

<sup>1</sup> IOM/ DRR/ LRC Displacement Mapping, December 2023.



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as persons with disability, female-headed households without support or older persons without care, and persons with serious medical conditions, has notably increased. Children have faced dramatic consequences in their access to education due to the displacement and the lack of safe access and retention.

**Access to rights and legal remedies:** Output 1.1 Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity have access to information on their rights and legal procedures.

In 2023, all legal aid interventions reached a total of 331,583 persons (51% women and girls and 49% men and boys). This includes 133,598 individuals (76% of the 2023 target) supported through legal awareness sessions (including 58% women and girls), 63,159 persons (63% of 2023 target) reached through legal services including counseling, legal assistance, and legal representation services. 98,052 persons benefited from counseling and legal assistance and representation regarding their **legal stay** and **16,850 persons were counseled on Housing, Land and Property Rights (HLP)**, and 1,537 on issues relating to detention<sup>2</sup>. Following increased tightening in the protection space for displaced Syrians in Q2 and Q3 with the implementation of several administrative instructions and increased restrictive measures, **October and November saw a substantial increase in reports of restrictive measures and social tensions**. Access restrictions were particularly reported in the Bekaa and Beirut/ Mount Lebanon following a series of circulars issued by MoIM in May and September 2023 resulting in restrictive measures such as restrictions of movement, arbitrary charging of taxes and fees, confiscation of documents, threats of eviction, curfews and instructions to register with municipalities. The latter circular provided instructions for national and international NGOs to provide extensive information on the nature of their protection, CP and GBV services. The tightening protection space is also visible through the data on services requested and provided. As an example, while the number of persons supported with legal counseling/ representation regarding their legal stay averaged around 3,000-4,000 persons between January and April 2023, counseling on legal assistance regarding legal stay spiked to over 110,000 in May and consecutive months (see below graph).<sup>3</sup>

Given the complex legal status issues facing displaced Syrians in the country and the challenges in obtaining legal residency, support to **legal counseling on residency, legal awareness and consultations are a critical protection response prioritized under the protection response in 2023**. VASyR 2023 data shows that only 20% of the Syrian displaced population hold legal residency which is a requirement to access further services such as civil documentation and legal remedies. Group and individual support to information and legal services is a critical priority to ensure displaced Syrians and others facing protection risks can access

correct, up-to-date and free-of-cost information on services and procedures. The increased needs for displaced Syrians to obtain legal residency to secure their stay in the country is also seen in a drastic increase in beneficiaries reached between 2022 and 2023 with a reach of over 118% of the target (40,000) in 2022 to reaching over 245% of the 40,000 target beneficiaries reaching a total of 98,052 people.

In 2023, displaced Syrians make up for the largest beneficiary group supported with legal aid, awareness and consultations with over 85% of all people reached by partners (Lebanese make 6%, PRL and PRS 7% and 2% other nationalities including migrants. Interestingly, the majority of beneficiaries of legal awareness sessions on matters of legal stay, civil documentation, marriage and divorce include women and girls, with 58% of all people reached in 2023 which might be attributed to the increasing needs to access legal residency for women through protection partners, as well as a significant uptick in counseling on civil documentation, including birth and marriage registration.

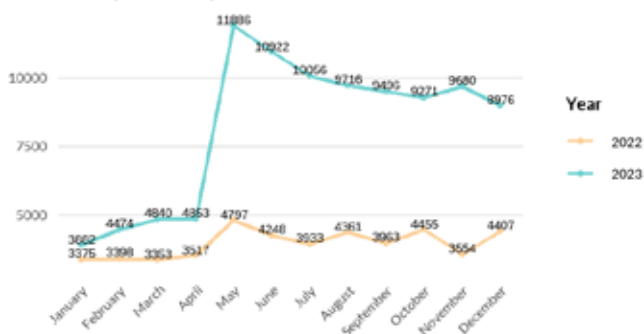
**Legal aid to address gender-based violence:** legal counseling specifically tailored to the needs of survivors and those at risk of gender-based violence has continued to be a critical intervention to empower survivors of GBV to take informed decisions including on procedures of divorce, separation and custody disputes. Since the beginning of 2023, a total of **2,890 people mainly women and girls (95% women and girls and 5% men and boys) were supported with legal counseling and representation**. GBV actors reported a correlation between the increasing socio-economic challenges facing all population groups and the increase in reported GBV incidents reported. The restrictive measures described above have resulted in two different developments, both with an impact on women and girls. Frequent checkpoint checks, curfews, increased risks of detention and deportation perceived to impact more men and boys, have resulted in women and children being increasingly exposed to the public sphere and spaces, and unsafe work in households or in the agricultural sector where they reported harassment, exploitation and potential for gender-based violence. In addition, the overall worsening of the socioeconomic situation has also reportedly led to intimate partner violence (IPV), separation of couples, marital disputes, and the need for counseling on divorce procedures. Survivors of GBV, in particular severe forms such as rape and sexual assault have reported limited reporting to law enforcement due to lack of trust and comfort with the system, limited follow up and accountability measures for perpetrators, lack of knowledge of procedures and a recurrent tendency to approach reported cases through mediation between survivors and perpetrators of IPV by the national justice system. Delays and strikes in courts and from judges have further contributed to the limited **access to justice impacting survivors', and impunity for perpetrators of GBV**.

**Community-based protection, empowerment and Prevention programs:** Output 2.1: Women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity are safe, empowered and supported in their communities.

Since the beginning of 2023, **81,062 women, men, girls and boys participated in community-based activities, including those held at community centers**. **227,943 persons** benefited from information sessions on access to services (89% Syrian; 9% Lebanese). An increase was observed in Q4 related to the escalation of hostilities in the south, and the sessions provided by partners to displaced population on available services there. **81,062 people were reached through center-based or mobile activities such as mobile desks and mobile counseling, mainly women and girls (77%)**. In 2023, **8,548 trained community focal points (88% Syrian and 10% Lebanese)**

1.2.2. Number of persons who benefitted from counseling, legal assistance, and legal representation regarding legal stay

Monthly Totals Comparison to Previous Year



<sup>2</sup> For legal awareness programs, this presents a significant increase in reach to affected populations and in the targets set between 2021 - 2023 from 99,046 in 2021 and 96700 in 2022 to 133,598 in 2023 reached of the target of 177,000 persons to be reached - or a respective increase of 20% from 2021 to 2023). However, in 2023, impacted by the deterioration of the security situation and multiple crises such as in Ein El-Helweh and the escalation in the South, less targets were reached through individual counseling and legal representation (73% reached in 2022 and 63% reached in 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Source: ActivityInfo, 2023 Q4.



**supported their community** sharing information on lifesaving services and referrals to specialized agencies (76% of those reached included women and girls and 24% were men and boys). Over the course of 2023, community focal points were engaged with the different agencies and have significantly contributed to community empowerment and knowledge on services and referrals (reaching 98% of the targets in Q4). However, cuts in funding have also resulted in a steady decrease of resources for community-based interventions.

In response to the risks of physical harm inflicted by unexploded ordinances, the sector also provided mine risk activities and awareness sessions. 8,000 flyers were distributed to households in the South and all collective shelters were targeted with specific mine risk awareness sessions.

Apart from legal awareness, protection partners placed significant efforts to reach communities to share information and awareness on available services, including how to access psychosocial, gender-based violence and child protection services. In 2023, **227,943 persons were reached with awareness on access to services** (64% of which are women and girls and 36% include men and boys). Reporting on outreach to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) as well as more hard-to-reach populations - including disempowered communities - is concerning low, with only 1% documented. The In-focus issued in Q2 of 2023 focused on women, girls, boys and men living with disabilities had already indicated the need for targeted programs. This presents an area of critical review and revised strategic focus in 2024.

Efforts to improve **the prioritization of critical community-based interventions** and unpack key challenges partners from all sectors are experiencing related to ensuring sustainability, inclusion of older persons and persons with disabilities and measuring and communicating impact, resulted in a report and list of community-based good-practice interventions. It will serve as a roadmap to improve community-based responses across all sectors for the development of the 2024 LRP strategy.

Similar to the trends observed in 2022, the **most prevalent child protection issue in 2023 continued to be exploitation, particularly the worst forms of child labor**. Child protection agencies identified child labor and street-related work as the primary child protection concerns in Lebanon, closely followed by instances of physical and emotional abuse against children. In response to these challenges, Child Protection actors provided case management services to a total of 11,245 children. Notably, 63% of these services were extended to boys, while 37% were directed towards girls.

**Gender-based violence prevention programs and engagement of men and boys:** women and girls' safe spaces (WGSS) are run by GBV partners across the country providing spaces for socializing, recreation, learning, sharing, and disclosing GBV incidents to access psychosocial support and specialized case management services. In 2023, 52,179 women and girls accessed safe spaces presenting 56% of the total target. In a review of GBV programs and as part of the VASyR assessment of 2023, communal centers and spaces such as Social Development Centers, Community Development Centers and other communal spaces including Women and Girls Safe Spaces have been identified as critical safe spaces for women, girls and others at risk of GBV to access life-saving and vital services<sup>4</sup>. Particularly centers with inclusive approaches and comprehensive services such as legal counseling, PSS, Case Management + Cash assistance and other recreational activities have been evaluated as most effective to address GBV risks. **In Q3, 85,516 women, girls, men and boys participated in targeted gender equality and empowerment activities** that addressed root causes for gender discrimination and inequality and violence against

women and girls. The uptick of negative gender and GBV-related rhetoric observed in Q3 reduced towards the end of the year overshadowed by the events in the South. However, the **shrinking space for GBV and Gender programs** supporting **women empowerment, gender equality and respect for diversity is an ongoing concern for GBV, gender and women's rights organizations**. As part of the South emergency response, GBV actors conducted some 2,000 awareness sessions on risks of GBV, child marriage and menstrual and personal hygiene during displacement. In addition, 569 humanitarian front line workers were sensitized on SEA and the increased risk thereof during crises.

**The Protection sector has also made efforts to integrate dedicated indicators reflecting on the use and effectiveness of Complaint and Feedback mechanisms including on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) with close linkages to the national-level PSEA Task Force.** An In-Focus was also issued on Feedback and Complaint mechanisms in Q3 of 2023 to reflect on modalities and recommendations. In 2023, **802,878 persons contacted feedback or complaints mechanisms** out of which 55% users are women and girls, the majority of which of Syrian nationality. This reflects mainly the number of persons contacting the UNHCR helpline (800,551 persons in 2023). On PSEA, 45,400 people received information on SEA and reporting mechanisms. Given the nature of SEA incidents, the vast majority of those reached include women and girls (93%) with children briefed through child-friendly PSEA material (31%). Under the leadership of the PSEA network, language specific information material on SEA was developed and shared across humanitarian sectors. Efforts to reach and report on survivors with disability included in awareness on SEA have to be enhanced in 2024.

**Community-based Child Protection:** In 2023, Child protection actors continued to strengthen the meaningful engagement of communities through social and behavioral change efforts, in order to address the root causes of harmful behaviors against girls and boys by working closely with community and religious leaders, caregivers and children to challenge harmful social practices that expose children to violence, abuse, neglect as well as to child labour, child marriage and other GBV risks such as sexual violence. In 2023, community-based child protection activities reached a total of **53,676 children**, against the annual target of 83,182. This is in addition to **14,047 caregivers supported in 2023 to promote their children's wellbeing and protection with positive parenting sessions and counseling** (annual target of 33,527).

In parallel, efforts were sustained at the **prevention level to encourage meaningful community engagement in addressing the root causes of harmful behaviors against girls and boys**. Child protection actors collaborated closely with influencers, including traditional & religious leaders, caregivers and children to challenge harmful social practices that expose children to violence, abuse, neglect as well as to child labor, child marriage and sexual violence. These efforts translated into the implementation of 538 social and behavioral change initiatives, surpassing the annual target of 450 and engaging over 1,729 influencers across different communities. These initiatives target Child Protection key stakeholders, i.e. municipalities, landowners, employers, religious leaders and Community-based Organizations with the aim to challenge harmful social and behavioural practices that lead to violations of child rights and to prevent child marriage, child labour and violence against children and women in communities. Child Protection partners also conducted capacity-building sessions for 15 Qudwas, which are community influencers or role models on prevention of child rights violations, including focusing on gender, GBV risk mitigation, and girls' facilitation skills.

<sup>4</sup> 91% of women and girls accessing safe spaces feel empowered through activities attended.



### Response to protection incidents and individual case support:

#### Output 3.1: Women, girls, men and boys in all their diversity live with dignity and are resilient to shocks.

Direct service provision through life-saving response services includes quality case management services to address physical, legal, gender-based violence and child protection cases as well as the specific needs of other vulnerable population groups including from disempowered communities. As part of the sector's strategy, protection case management is often most effective if linked with a cash intervention to reduce vulnerabilities, allow access to essential services, safety or ensure ability to be independent from perpetrators of violence such as in the case of survivors of intimate partner violence. In 2023, the sector updated its Cash Assistance Guidelines that elaborates on the different modalities, linkages with social work and post distribution monitoring procedures. Further response services include specialized services such as care services for persons with disability, older persons without support, rehabilitation and MHPSS services.

**Protection Case Management:** In 2023, **10,363 persons have received individual protection case management services.** Women and girls make 53% of all beneficiaries of protection case management, while 11% include older persons and 4.4% include persons with disabilities. In 2023, the sector reached only 34% of the annual target. The main reasons for the gradual decrease in people reached include reduced funding, need for reprioritizing, access restrictions of partners and beneficiaries, inability to cover transportation costs<sup>5</sup> Protection cases include persons displaced from the South and affected by the conflict, the ones exposed to physical and legal protection risks, those at risk of detention, deportation, persons facing exploitation, extortion and other critical needs in accessing their rights. Due to the continuous increase of mental health and psychosocial support needs for individuals facing serious protection risks, partners have integrated MHPSS programs into their protection programs or referred to specialized MHPSS service providers. **In Q4, with the escalation of hostilities in the South there was an increase of 65% of individuals at heightened risk receiving group and individual structures MHPSS services compared to Q3, reaching a total of 8,392 in**<sup>6</sup> Support and reach to Persons living with Disability through specialized other programs: sector members implementing specific programs supported a total of 15,323 persons living with physical or intellectual disability and older persons with specialized rehabilitation services reaching 72% of the overall target. People living with disability addressed through the specialized assistance of the Protection Sector mainly live with motoric disabilities or visual impairments, with the majority being children beneficiaries, and overall serving men, boys and women and girls similarly. It is notable that 40% of all beneficiaries include Lebanese nationals supported by specialized Organizations with Disabilities.

**Response to Gender-based Violence:** GBV case management services are social work type of support services where an individual case worker develops a case plan to address critical gender-based protection risks. Up until the end of 2023, **16,122 women, girls, boys and men were supported with GBV case management and focused and non-focused psychosocial support as well as support to access safe shelters.** Over 94% of all GBV incidents reported through the GBV IMS concern women and girls indicating a disproportionate exposure to GBV of women and girls<sup>7</sup>. For high and medium risk cases of sexual or physical violence, interventions are in most cases lifesaving as they mitigate or directly address a threat to the person's - mainly women and girls - physical integrity and life. In 2023, due to the socio-economic crisis and exponentially increasing rental prices, women and girls have increasingly supported the household by

working as domestic workers, in the agricultural field or in shops. Partners raised concerns over reported exposure to harmful practices resulting in an increase of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls at their workspaces and by landlords. In Q4, consequences of the hostilities in the South negatively affected the lives of women and girls as families got separated, women had less access to livelihood opportunities and partners reported an increase in intimate partner violence within households. Those displaced also report that they face lack of privacy and hygiene conditions in collective shelters or when hosted with friends or families.

**GBV sector partners continued distributing dignity kits to women and girls of reproductive age as a part of a comprehensive GBV service package.** The dire economic situation in Lebanon has resulted in significant challenges for many, including difficulties in affording necessities, hence households have opted to prioritize basic needs such as food, housing and primary health. Women and girls, in particular, face hardships in securing menstrual hygiene items due to their economic vulnerability. The provision of dignity kits contributes to the prevention of health issues and promotes the overall health and well-being of women and girls. **As part of the emergency response to address the needs resulting from the displacement in the South, until the end of December, dignity kits were distributed to over 2,600 women and girls in reproductive age.** As part of the sector's thematic focus, period poverty and the increasing risks presenting this trend particularly for girls such as school dropout and use of unsafe, unhygienic items, a round table workshop was facilitated by UNFPA resulting in a strategic paper shared with the relevant WGs.

**Individual support to Children at risk of Violence, Abuse, neglect and Exploitation:** In 2023, child protection case management and specialized services reached a total of **11,028 children (4,099 girls and 7,146 boys)** out of the annual target 13,481. Additionally, specialized focused psychosocial support (PSS) was provided to **24,306 girls, boys and caregivers** (10,861 girls, 9,207 boys and 6,748 caregivers) out of the annual target of 32,316. Furthermore, the identification of households and children in need was strengthened through the reception of 245 monthly new requests for assistance on average per NGO in 2023. As part of the South emergency response, up until the end of 2023, Child Protection actors provided specialized case management services to 91 children, including those with disabilities, 238 children received community-based psychosocial support sessions, 340 beneficiaries received non-specialized psychosocial sessions and 499 caregivers received information on child protection.

**Cash assistance as part of Case Management Support across the Protection Sector (incl. CP and GBV):** The Protection sector provides two types of cash interventions - emergency cash assistance addressing a short-term, immediate protection risk and recurrent protection cash aimed at providing longer-term support to structural protection risks, the latter of which have to be coupled with case management service provision. A total of **43,311 households were supported** with Emergency Cash Assistance (ECA) addressing their immediate protection risk through a one-time cash assistance provision or Recurrent Protection Cash Assistance (RPCA) which aims to address individuals and households at heightened risk. Post-distribution monitoring indicates that 98% of beneficiaries - across populations - reported no safety challenges when accessing cash assistance provided by protection partners. In Q4, a revision of the existing Cash for Protection SOPs included case provisions in conflict and emergency situations. The revision aimed to ensure that displaced populations have access to cash in case of conflict, and to

<sup>5</sup> In 2021, the sector reached 22,537 individuals, while this reduced to 21,439 in 2022 and to 10,370 individuals in 2023 only.

<sup>6</sup> Noting that Mental Health Programs are also reported under the respective indicators of the health sector.

<sup>7</sup> Please also see the 2023 GBV IMS Mid-year report, February 2024: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106653>



provide guidance to partners to ensure a harmonization and application of protection standards and procedures by all sector members considering the context. The post-distribution monitoring (PDM) for cash for protection also indicates that 92% of those receiving either emergency or recurrent cash reported that the transfer value met the protection needs they aimed to address.

In addition, through **targeted cash for GBV interventions monitored through dedicated PDMs**, 86% of the interviewed assisted individuals reported reduced sexual exploitation and abuse as a result of the provided emergency and recurrent cash assistance. Furthermore, 95% reflected improved mental and physical well-being along with mitigated intimate partner violence. The figures also showed that 98% of the assisted individuals considered that the emergency cash assistance alleviated the immediate risk of GBV.

**With a total of 71,357 referrals received by protection actors, the Protection Sector makes up for 47% of all referrals placed and recorded through the Inter-Agency Referral System.** The top two referral locations are the Bekaa and Beirut and Mount Lebanon with a total of 55% of all protection referrals received. GBV referrals addressing life-saving protection risks accounted for some 4,520 referrals which is 3% of all referrals made in 2023. Over the course of 2023, all regional locations have exponentially increased their response to referrals with an acceptance and acknowledgment rate of 77% across locations. Most referrals are placed to protection actors requesting protection cash and case management as well as other specialized services. As a follow up, further training on safe and effective referrals to protection and GBV actors will be maintained to ensure effective response to protection risks and reduction of the considerable number of cases that are not meeting the eligibility criteria for protection referrals. Additionally, the existing referral system facilitated the receipt of a total of 14,224 referrals to child protection actors, constituting 9.3% of all referrals exchanged between agencies in Lebanon in 2023. These figures underline the ongoing risks facing children and the critical role of child protection actors in mitigating the impact of the multifaceted crisis on vulnerable populations in Lebanon.

**Protection and GBV mainstreaming have been priority areas within the inter-sectoral response with a strong focus on ensuring age, gender and diversity concerns are mainstreamed and GBV risks are identified and mitigated across all sectors.** To support cross-sectoral protection mainstreaming, the protection sector has been key in collecting protection trends and to disseminate it across the humanitarian sectors on quarterly basis. In addition, an online workshop was facilitated for all sector coordinators and members outlining the importance and key principles of protection, gender and GBV mainstreaming, leading to a shared folder accessible to all partners with all relevant documents.

As part of a series of In-Focus documents, analysis on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP): Complaint & Feedback Mechanisms (CFM - accessible on the Inter-Agency Coordination Portal [here](#)) were issued. In another In-Focus challenges faced in access to information and assistance for Women, girls, men and boys living with disabilities ([here](#)) were outlined across sectors.

To share basic legal information to access services, **non-legal stakeholders were trained on key messages that were developed and disseminated on birth, marriage, death, legal residency**, esp. for Education & Health sectors, Community Focal Points and structures. Cross-sectoral discussions were held with the livelihood sector on integrated protection programming to ensure livelihood sector programs safely integrate persons with specific needs and follow protection principles.

To enhance GBV and gender mainstreaming, the sector coordinators worked closely with the gender working group and related entities looking at how gender and GBV risks are mitigated. Building on existing efforts from 2022, the gender and GBV focal points were selected and trained in a comprehensive gender and GBV mainstreaming workshop. By the end of 2023, all sectors had dedicated gender and GBV focal points and sector specific tipsheets and gender action plans in place to support mainstreaming within their sectors. Pioneer sectors such as health, livelihoods, migrant and protection sectors rolled out cascade gender and GBV trainings within their sectors. The network of trained trainers also meets regularly to discuss cross-sectoral challenges. An online training course was developed that can be accessed in English and Arabic. The GBV sub-sector further worked on ensuring easy access and effective referrals by humanitarian sector members to GBV service providers by training all sectors members at national and sub-national level on the GBV referral pathways (specifically for CMR facilities a user-friendly Arabic version was created to foster the referrals of GBV referrals by health service providers.

In support of the emergency response in the South, a protection mainstreaming checklist was developed for collective shelter monitoring that was shared with and integrated into a site management guideline developed by the Disaster Risk Management unit. In addition, a protection snapshot is collected on a bi-monthly basis outlining the impact of the hostilities in the South on the affected population, including for specific risk groups. This has contributed to cross-sectoral knowledge generation on the protection environment feeding into the sector strategies and response plans.



## 2. KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SECTOR TO LCRP OUTCOME AND IMPACTS

In 2023, the Protection Sector continued its commitment to support, protect and ensure durable solutions to vulnerable population groups in Lebanon by ensuring their rights are respected and access to justice is equitable available amidst a challenging socio-economic and political landscape, marked by shrinking protection space. This environment was characterized by political uncertainty and deadlock, exacerbated by the prolonged absence of a president since October 2022 and the parliament's inability to enact crucial laws for political reform. Adding to the complexity, 2023 witnessed an all-time high in anti-refugee statements, a stringent enforcement of restrictive and security measures by both security forces and local authorities nationwide, including registration exercises by municipalities, searches and arrest at checkpoints, raids and evictions, detention and deportation specifically for those without legal residency.

**The protection sector also navigated through judicial strikes, delays, and the unsettling escalation of conflict at the Southern border.** In addition, public institutions continued to face significant operational challenges due to shortages in electricity, increased telecommunication and fuel prices, and strained and reduced human capacity and resources. **The limited administrative and operational capacity has resulted in considerable barriers for individuals at heightened risk to access their rights and legal remedies and securing legal residency and civil documentation.** In 2023, several decisions were issued by the DG-GSO regarding legal residency and entry regulations. The most significant ones were the suspension of regularization of residency status for Syrians who entered Lebanon irregularly as of 16 May 2023, and the exit formalities for displaced Syrians who have no valid residency in Lebanon. These decisions made it impossible for those who entered irregularly to Lebanon or those who overstayed their visas to regularize their situation without exiting Lebanon. Despite this challenging context, the sector continued to support Syrian displaced to access legal residency through legal counseling, assistance and representation efforts, including GSO-accompaniment. These efforts have led to an increase in legal residency rates from 17.3% in 2022 to 19.7% in 2023 (VASyR 2023). Similarly, and despite the numerous challenges hindering Syrian displaced access to civil documentation, the percentage of children born in Lebanon whose birth is registered at the Nofous level has increased from 53% in 2022 to 55.6% in 2023. The percentage of children born in Lebanon who have completed birth registration at the level of foreigner's registry has risen from 36% in 2022 to 41% in 2023 (VASyR 2023). These increases are a tangible result of the protection sector efforts, through legal awareness, counseling and support. Additionally, the advocacy on the Birth Registration action Plan led to the adoption of various measures by the Government of Lebanon to further facilitate Syrian displaced access to Birth registration. These include: the decision issued in June 2023 by the Personal Status Department at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities extending the previous policies related to the exemption from the procedure of late birth registration for children born between January 1, 2011 and 26 May, 2023; a waiver of the requirement of legal stay to register the birth of Syrian children, and those of Palestinian refugees from Syria; a partial waiver (only one spouse) of legal stay to register marriages among Syrian nationals and Palestinian refugees from Syria; and the facilitation of proof of marriage to register births by allowing Syrian parents married in Lebanon to present a marriage certificate executed in Lebanon instead of the family booklet or marriage certificate issued from Syria as previously required.

**Furthermore, and despite the complex political environment, progress was made with regards to several national action plans and policies such as support of the launch of the action plan for the**

**Prevention and Response to Child Marriage in Lebanon, on October 9 and the Launch of the National SOPs for Gender Based Violence in Lebanon in November 2023.** Moreover, efforts are persistently underway to advance the amendment of Law 422 on the Protection of Juveniles in Conflict with the Law or at Risk in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). This collaboration allowed for a comprehensive revision of the law, paving the way for it to reach the Parliamentary Committee for its finalization and submission to the Parliament.

**In July 2023, the sector compiled a range of advocacy messages compiled through the Legal Actors group, the protection, child protection and Gender-based Violence sub-working groups.** In coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) the sector engaged in constructive dialogue with The Personal Status Department (PSD) at the National level to address some of the institutional barriers encountering Syrian displaced individuals when trying to access birth documentations. The discussion resulted in positive outcomes, notably the elimination of the legal residency requirement at the PSD level to facilitate the marriage registration of Syrian displaced individuals with children, to ensure these children access birth documentation. Additionally, the sector in coordination with MoSA remained vigilant in identifying challenges encountered by Syrian displaced and legal actors in processing birth documentation at Nofous level and raising these challenges for discussion with PSDs in several governorates.

**Moreover, the sector, in close coordination with MOSA and MOIM, successfully tackled challenges raised by partners and Syrian displaced regarding the issuance of birth certificates at the Mukhtar Level.** Efforts were concentrated on addressing challenges in multiple regions across the country, ensuring that Mukhtars adhere to MOIM regulations and circulars. Advocacy was also undertaken by UNHCR and sector partners with the GSO to support displaced Syrians regarding access to the territory, detention and risk of deportation. Several detention partners are supporting detainees with support interventions, such as case management interventions, advocacy and direct assistance to enhance prison conditions. A separate working group meeting was held to bring together information and concerns from the partners were raised to the Head of the Prison Directory at the Ministry of Justice. The advocacy note also called upon the Government of Lebanon to adhere to its commitment to uphold the principle of non-refoulement.

As the socio-economic situation in Lebanon continued to deteriorate, protection risks, particularly eviction threats, were increasingly reported across various vulnerable populations. They were at their highest level since 2021 with 7.2% of Syrian displaced households reporting moving accommodation in the last 6 months, out of which 51.6% relocated due to their inability to pay the increasing rent. Eviction has serious impacts on households who find themselves struggling with debt accumulation, increased psychological distress, risk of homelessness, and loss of employment (VASyR 2023) and has been reported to contribute to the risk of sexual exploitation particularly for female-headed households. To prevent and respond to eviction threats, the protection sector maintained in 2023 its close collaboration with the shelter sector through their preventative programming.

**Outcome 2: Women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity are safe, empowered and supported in their communities.**

**In 2023, the sector continued to empower women, men, boys and girls to feel safer in their communities through community-based protection activities implemented at the community level including at community centers and women and girls safe spaces (WGSS).** Positively, there has been an 8.7% increase in Syrian displaced



# 2023 ANNUAL SECTOR DASHBOARD

## Protection including Child Protection and GBV



Inter-Agency  
Coordination  
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households reporting that women and girls feel very safe walking alone in the area at night (2022: 47.4%, 2023: 56.1%), including for women and girls with disability (Vasyr 2023). Despite this increase in reported safety in walking alone at night for women, reported rates of women avoiding places due to unsafety remain the same as in 2022, with 15% of all Syrian displaced households reporting that it is not safe for women and girls to walk at night. In parallel, 14% of Lebanese HHS, 36% of Palestinian households and 15% of live out migrant Households have reported that there are areas that women and girls avoid because they feel unsafe. As such, women and girls continued to consider streets and public spaces, specifically at night, as high-risk areas with bullying and verbal harassment being cited by women as a major safety concern, in addition to sexual harassment and violence. For Syrian displaced girls, the same protection and safety concerns were highlighted, but also the fear of kidnapping. These safety concerns continued to be reported in 2023 and were exacerbated by the continuous negative public rhetoric against refugees, in addition to the negative public discourse on gender and GBV which emerged in the late half of 2023, fueling sentiments against gender equality, women empowerment and GBV program. This led to significant challenges for partners to safely implement programs, needing resort to amended modalities to ensure continuity of activities. This uptick in inter-communal disparities, negative sentiments, discrimination, exploitation and increased tension has resulted in increased fears and feelings of insecurity, also limited the ability of the community to support the most vulnerable and ensuring their protection.

**The sector's work to enhance accountability to affected populations is seen with 54% reporting complaints and feedback, a 2% increase from 2022.** However, the percentage of older persons and PWDs who reported complaints remained stable with only 1.5% of PWDs and 3% of older persons having used the mechanism in 2023 - similarly to 2022 (VASyR 2022 and 2023); this indicates the limitations facing vulnerable groups in accessing CFM and proves the continuous need for tailored outreach and awareness to older persons and PWDs on AAP. On a similar note, the protection sector supported the inter-sector team to hold a joint discussion across response frameworks on collective AAP to suggest key priority workstreams following the issuance of the Accountability to Affected Populations snapshot of the Lebanon Humanitarian response in early 2023. The sector also supported the development of the IA document "In focus: Women, girls, men and boys with disabilities" to provide humanitarian actors across sectors and responses with an overview of the current needs of PWDs and to highlight policy and programmatic gaps and recommendations towards more inclusive and specialized services.

**Outcome 3: Women, girls, men and boys in all their diversity live with dignity and are resilient to shocks**

**In 2023, the protection sector efforts in assisting vulnerable individuals referred to protection services were aligned with the Inter-Agency endeavors to strengthen cross-sectoral referrals.** This was achieved through the facilitation of orientation sessions for partners, focusing on the effective utilization of Inter-Agency Referral Tools, the update of the IA service mapping by partners, alongside the development of quarterly referral analysis reports which not only provided a comprehensive national overview of referrals but also included sector-specific analyses. As such, a total of 152,446 referrals were made in Lebanon, with 90,101 individuals identified as being at heightened risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and deprivation referred to the protection sector including CP and GBV. Notably, 46.8% of the total referrals were directed to the protection sector, the GBV sub-sector received 3%, while the Child Protection (CP) sub-sector received 9.3% of all referrals, collectively accounting

for 59.1% of the total referrals in Lebanon. Despite the significant increase in the number of cases – 38,203 cases successfully accepted in 2023 compared to 31,703 cases in 2022—the sector maintained a stable success rate as the successfully accepted rate stood at 42.4%, demonstrating the resilience and efficacy of the protection services despite the heightened demand.

**The sector also worked to strengthen the identification of persons displaced from Syria with protection needs and ensured their referral to UNHCR's resettlement program or other humanitarian admission programs where durable solutions were required.** To this end, 8,625 submissions of persons at heightened risk were made for resettlement and other humanitarian pathways to third countries.

**In 2023, protection cash assistance continued to be provided to vulnerable individuals facing protection risks across population cohorts.** Similarly to 2022, out of all individuals receiving protection cash assistance in 2023, 95% reported receiving the assistance safely and 92% reported that the cash assistance transfer value was adequate to meet their protection needs. This was a 3% increase from 2022 where 89% of individuals reported that the protection cash transfer value was 'adequate' to meet their protection needs. This demonstrates the sector's continuous efforts to ensure the appropriateness of the cash transfer value and of the cash modality to support individuals at risk and/or who have experienced a sudden shock and change of circumstances to recover safely. To this end and to maintain the efficacy and relevance of the protection cash assistance in the face of economic fluctuations and currency devaluation, the protection sector conducted a light review in mid 2023 of the protection sector cash guidance where the transfer value was revised and re-calculated based on the average cost incurred to address protection threats.

The deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in Lebanon have significantly heightened GBV risks both within and outside households. Notably, Physical assault and psychological/emotional abuse were the most frequently reported types of GBV incidents in the first half of 2023 (GBVIMS 2023 mid year report). In parallel, survivors of GBV continued to face challenges in claiming rights from the national system, for fear of retaliation, the continuous fear of arrest and deportation for the lack of legal residency, particularly for Syrian and migrant survivors, and the paralyzed legal system in Lebanon. Furthermore, socio-economic factors coupled with school closure in the beginning of 2023 contributed to additional risks of GBV against children increasing their exposure to child marriage and sexual violence. Access to safe shelter has continued to be one of the major issues faced by GBV service providers. **Despite this challenging situation, GBV actors have remained keen to support women and girls through the provision of GBV services at safe spaces, including focused and non-focused PSS, awareness sessions, lifesaving case management services, and facilitated access to Clinical Management of Rape services for survivors of rape.** 16 GBV case management agencies provided comprehensive case management services in line with sectoral SOPs, with two additional local GBV actors joining the GBVIMS system in 2023. Positively, 98 percent of POC provided with GBV case management services expressed their satisfaction with the services. Furthermore, 91% of all women and girls accessing safe spaces reported that their participation in the activity resulted in increased feeling of empowerment.





### 3. CHALLENGES, RISKS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Several challenges were identified by protection sector members throughout the year:

\* **Shrinking protection space:** the outlined instructions to municipalities in registering displaced Syrians as well as the restrictive measures, have significantly contributed to restrictions of movements of displaced Syrians in the country. Particularly the negative public rhetoric against refugees/ displaced Syrians as well as against UNHCR has resulted in negative backlash on the Syrian population. Fear, and anxiety as a result of the raids and deportations resulted in movement restrictions, with knock-on effects in higher numbers approaching community centers, and a significant increase in queries and requests for legal residency through partner hotlines and frontliners as well as questions about how to stay safe. In turn, this impacts on access to services, livelihood and enrolment in center-based activities. The circulars issued by the MoIM indicating restrictive measures (as mentioned above) have placed challenges on partners in operating protection programs and activities.

\* **Limited capacities of judicial and administrative structures:** several times during 2023, judges and civil servants, including those working for the PSD went on strike due to the working conditions and limited payments through the public sector. This has significantly impacted on access to effective protection and judicial systems given the considerable backlog and delays in cases this created.

\* **Limited predictable and long-term funding for the sector:** while the sector is the relatively best funded sector, with 59% of the required budget received in 2023, several activities were reduced or have been implemented with limited staffing capacity. This particularly impacted on the ability to support the strengthening of national systems towards stabilization and sustainability, and led to a reduction of human resources. In addition, the escalation of hostilities in the South led to increased needs for protection programs, without allocation of additional funds. Consequently, some partners had to reallocate existing resources to respond to the needs of IDPs and affected populations in the South.

\* **Access and service delivery challenges:** Operational and access challenges as partners have encountered difficulties in delivering services for IDPs and accessing areas close to the southern borders due to the curfew imposed by the government on both humanitarian actors and civilians. In other areas, partners faced access gaps to certain ITS, especially in the Bekaa. Operational impact linked to increase of the raids, deportation and arrests, where self-imposed restrictions by refugees led to limited attendance of community centers and individual specialized services, with partners switching to mobile modalities when possible and avoiding implementation of activities which would lead to refugees' gathering, i.e. putting in place safety plans to continue working and responding to needs. Legal actors had to prioritize legal aid for legal residency shifting the priority from any other legal topic.

· **Women and girls continue to face challenges in accessing services as a result of gender-based violence,** including sexual violence. GBV is often embedded in harmful traditional practices such as child marriage, and intimate partner violence. GBV is experienced everywhere, however homes are considered as the most unsafe place, whereas public spaces also present significant risks

to women and girls with reported sexual harassment and sexual violence. Despite progress made so far in the sensitization of the community on GBV core concepts and safe and ethical referral pathways, GBV remains underreported in Lebanon and funding to address root causes is limited. Facilitating safe and confidential services for survivors and building survivor trust in services is key. Understanding the needs of particularly vulnerable groups, including survivors living with disability and those with diverse SOGIESC, is a consistent challenge given the intersectionality of vulnerabilities that might be considered as additional barriers to report and seek support. Furthermore, one of the main challenges faced is the stigmatization of GBV survivors by the community, which hinders survivors with different vulnerabilities from reporting their experience in GBV to specialized services, including the case management services. This was further exacerbated by the negative rhetoric on gender and GBV.

\* **Access to safe shelter has been considered as one of the major challenges identified** by GBV service providers. Safe shelters unstandardized admission criteria in the Lebanese context is often negatively affecting survivors and not always in line with needs (i.e. survivors with boys above 10 years, limited structure to ensure safe exit from shelters, limited access to shelters by PWD, persons with mental health concerns, admission of survivors with diverse SOGIESC, etc.) Additionally, the absence of a clear exit strategy, allowing the GBV survivors to generate income and be independent when leaving the safe shelter, is one of the constant challenges faced in relation to safe shelter services.

\* **Reporting cases of child survivors of GBV** remains a challenge faced by different GBV service providers. Due to the different procedures of reporting across sectors, child protection actors report GBV incidents perpetrated against children under the CPIMS which might cause double reporting or underreporting, if the actor is not a GBVIMS user organization. Interoperability between CPIMS and GBVIMS is now under discussion, with the aim of enhancing reporting.

\* **Migrants continue to show high levels of risk and vulnerabilities while living in Lebanon** as they face barriers to access services, community stigmatization and limited awareness, and a limited number of deployed organizations or inclusive programs that work with migrants. Migrants face multiple protection concerns such as sexual exploitation, trafficking, statelessness among children, evictions, forced and unpaid labor, and suicide.



### 4. CASE STUDY

Community empowerment and social cohesion to support the emergency needs in the South

Community-based and community-led initiatives remain a bedrock of protection in Lebanon, promoting self-reliance for women, men, boys, and girls across the age, gender and diversity spectrum. In parallel, community centers function as safe and public spaces for refugees and host communities alike to access protection, social, legal, learning, and other services and activities, within a one-stop-shop.

Throughout 2023, UNHCR together with its partner SHEILD Association implemented Social Development Programmes in six locations in the South, involving activities such as agricultural planting and food preservation in MoSA-run community centers known as Social Development Centers (SDC). Following the escalation of hostilities from October 2023 and the consequent displacement from the southernmost governorates, Lebanese and displaced Syrian community members trained through prior SDC programming responded by proposing an initiative to apply their skills in local and artisanal crafts to support newly displaced families. With support from UNHCR and SHEILD Associ-



ation, communities came together in SDCs in Nabatieh and Tyre to produce high quality food and craft kits, including canned food items, wool clothing, and soap production. Through the project, the community aimed to produce 600 children's blankets, 300 children's jackets, 1,000 jars of tomato paste and maktous, and 100 kilos of zaatar/ thyme. As of the end of 2023, 600 families had received these parcels, alongside in-person psychosocial services and psychological first aid. In addition to the emergency-related impact of the project, the initiative also fostered women empowerment and self-reliance of vulnerable community members, including amongst female-headed households.



**Partner Presence by Governorate**

