

UNHCR Lebanon

Community Development Update December 2014

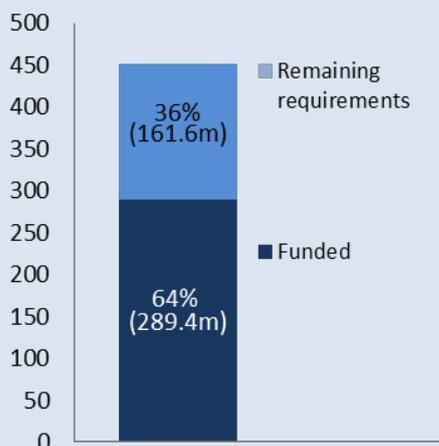
Key Figures

1,158,995	individuals registered or pending registration
80%	of refugees are women and children
39%	of women and girl refugees have specific needs
25%	of registered refugees children are at risk

Funding

UNHCR total requirements 2014: USD **451m**

USD in m



December developments

- A total of 1,500 families with urgent protection and assistance needs were identified by Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs) and referred to UNHCR and partners for follow-up and provision of assistance. The majority of referrals in December involved persons requiring medical assistance. During home visits and other contact with refugees, health ROVs provided information on health risks and conditions and guidance on services and procedures. For urgent medical cases, ROVs worked together with UNHCR and partners to ensure that patients could access hospitals and the required treatment.
- As part of the participatory assessment (PA) conducted during the last quarter of 2014, multi-functional teams comprised of humanitarian workers from 23 agencies held 140 focus group discussions and interviews with 1,000 refugees. Based on the findings, a multi-sectoral community action plan will be developed in early 2015 to better address the identified concerns and mitigate their impact in the coming months. The major concerns reported were:
 - **Health:** High costs, limited availability of chronic medication and specialized services;
 - **Shelter/WASH:** High costs of rent and heating and lack of safe drinking water;
 - **Education:** Lack of clear and updated information, preference for schools with Syrian curriculum;
 - **Protection:** Isolation of women for cultural and traditional reasons, violence against women and girls, street children and child labour, access to services for older persons, sense of marginalization, access to information, in particular for persons with disabilities also suffering from lack of access to livelihood opportunities.

Follow-up on the identified issues will start in early January 2015.

- This month, UNHCR supported five NGOs to run psychosocial and learning activities for 25,000 refugees and Lebanese at the 28 Community Development Centres. Starting January 2015, an assessment will be conducted with participants to measure the relevance, quality and socio-economic impact at 3 and 6 months following completion of each skills training activity.
- By the end of December, Al Majmoua, a local NGO specialized in livelihoods, concluded its implementation of livelihood programmes in Tripoli, Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa. By year end, 9,372 individuals, (38% Lebanese, 75% female) had benefited from vocational training, job counseling, job placement and loans. An evaluation of the programme showed that limited work opportunities, a tight legal framework and a high rate of informal economic activity in Lebanon posed challenges to linking skilled beneficiaries to jobs.
- Under the patronage of the Ministry of Social Affairs, an end of year art, photo exhibit and artisanal fair was jointly organized by UNIDO and UNHCR from 4th- 6th of December, bringing together Lebanese and Syrian communities to celebrate the long tradition of handicrafts in Lebanon. The fair hosted ten stalls run by a range of cooperatives, NGOs and individuals and offered culinary and artisan wares including metal and glass work, block printing and embroidery. Each stall was able to make between 1,000 and 1,500 USD, directly benefiting around 100 persons from the proceeds.

Achievements: January – December

Activity	 Reached Jan - Dec	 2014 Target
Specific needs cases referred through volunteers	73,500	75,000
Refugee outreach volunteers mobilized	443	750
Community centres established	28	50
Persons registered and benefitting from Community center activities	177,000	240,000
	0	



Selection of beauty products Alia is selling during her home visits to locals. She received a micro-loan to start her small business and manages to add to the income of her Lebanese husband /UNHCR/D.Kattan/2014

Needs

Refugees in Lebanon face myriad protection challenges – increasingly complex in nature, as a result of the ever-evolving protection context.

Many of these challenges are exacerbated by an individuals' age, gender, background and living situation amongst other factors. For instance, according to UNHCR's 2014 Women Alone Report, many of the challenges faced by female-headed households stem from their increasing economic vulnerability. Similarly, a UNFPA assessment on Syrian youth (15-24 year-olds) reported that 89% described themselves as depressed, anxious or afraid. Youth considered unemployment and security conditions as negatively affecting their psychological status and their propensity for violence, as well as their gender relations within households. In view of these findings, UNHCR is exploring innovative ways to reach out to vulnerable persons including the women at risk, the elderly and disabled persons to tailor remedies to meet their needs and to mitigate vulnerabilities. Throughout, UNHCR engages refugees in finding solutions to the challenges they face through regular participatory assessments including focus group discussions, self-managed structured refugee committees and center-based committees. These structures are way for UNHCR to understand refugees, needs and expectations and concerns and are important forums in which refugees are able to take part in decision making and build their own initiatives.

Challenges

Dispersed refugee population: Given refugees are dispersed across over 1,700 locations there is a need to build on existing outreach and support initiatives to respond to and to prevent protection risks.

Increasing tensions: In light of scarce resources, diminishing salaries and job opportunities have led to an increase in tension among refugees and local communities as well as increasingly restrictive government policies on livelihood programmes for Syrians.

Overstretched social services and limited job opportunities: According to an ILO livelihood assessment, 30% of refugees are unemployed. 88% of those who are employed are unskilled or semi-skilled labourers, paid 40% less than the minimum national wage, with an average salary of 277 USD per month. Female Syrian workers earn 30% less than male workers, with an average salary of 165 USD per month.

Strategy

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

- Assist refugees at risk to access basic services;
- Strengthen outreach to refugees and host communities;
- Empower and promote self-management in communities;
- Increase self-reliance opportunities;
- Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Development Centres.

UNHCR implementing partners

Amel Association, Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CMLC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), INTERSOS, International Alert, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Makhzoumi Foundation, Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), Restart Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, Right to Play, Search for Common Ground (SFCG), Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention for Local Development (SHEILD), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).