

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The work of the social stability sector remained in line with progress achieved during the first few months of the year, with most progress realised at the community level. Support to local CSOs has been key in bringing members from different communities together and foster dialogue on inter-community relations and possible tensions, and resulted in the establishment of 13 additional community conflict mitigation mechanisms in the Bekaa this month. The 33 mechanisms established so far this year will be crucial to maintain dialogue and prevent escalation of tensions should the security situation deteriorate following military developments in Syria, especially as these mechanisms are established in areas such as Baalbeck, West and Central Bekaa, Akkar and around Tripoli which are all areas more prone to tensions. In addition to this work to engage community leaders, the sector's complementary work with youth is also continuing at a fast pace, with 32 new youth initiatives engaging over 580 youth this months (see infographics below).

Progress to build the capacity of key institutions on social stability has been relatively slow, with only 3 additional municipalities benefitting from capacity support to cope with the increase pressure at the local level. However 14 new projects relieving the main source of tensions in the most vulnerable cadastres were completed, with a notable increase in the size of the recently completed projects, which doubled the total amount already invested by partners so far this year (US \$ 2.375 million in total). In this respect, the publication of a DFID report looking at the impact of such basic services/community support projects is of particular interest to the work of the sector. The report points out that such projects have an impact in increasing the positivity of citizens in regard to services, as well as in reducing the sense of conflict, increasing the sense of cooperation, and enhancing perceptions of the capability and trustworthiness of the municipality. Yet, this impact varies by project and location, with smaller projects such as sport fields generating a relatively comparable change of perception than bigger ones (sewage networks, water supply). The impact study also shows that relieving resource pressures on water, sewage or public infrastructures reduces the tendency of host communities to 'blame' the refugees. The report also particularly emphasizes the importance of broad consultation process and community awareness activities to maximize the impact of such projects on social stability. This reinforces the approach chosen by the sector, which sees these projects as the final outcome of a community mobilization process. This year, the sector has already engaged 1,573 community members in such processes at the local level, in 96 locations.

