

Impact Evaluation Report

Lebanon Municipal Support Project



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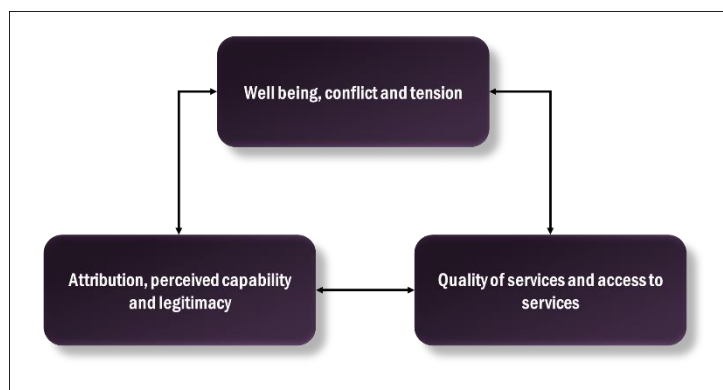
Lebanon Municipal Support Project Impact Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

Purpose of this report

The primary purpose of this impact evaluation is to identify the change in patterns in sense-making data collected from respondents after the implementation of selected DFID-funded projects in three municipalities across Lebanon. Changes in the patterns are used to ascertain:

- Whether the projects have changed the perceived quality of services and access to services;
- Whether changes associated with the projects have contributed to a change in the level of social tension.
- To whom these changes are attributed and whether they have affected perceptions of the capability and responsiveness of municipalities.



Summary of key findings

- The DFID-funded projects have had an impact. They have increased the positivity of citizens in regard to the focus services, reduced the sense of conflict/competition, increased the sense of cooperation, and enhanced perceptions of the capability and trustworthiness of the municipality.
- This impact varies by project and location. The reasons are likely to include differences in expectations of state service provision between locations, as well as specific sociological, political and demographic factors. A localised approach, with a higher degree of control over project selection, planning and measurement at local level, is likely to deliver greater effect.
- Although the projects have had a positive effect on perceptions of the municipal government, delivery through the municipality has not proved sufficient *in itself* to give people a sense that they are in control of what is happening. It is worth

considering widening the consultation to include a larger number of citizens in the area, to increase a sense of empowerment among respondents.

- Awareness is key – there is a direct correlation between high awareness of projects and data which indicates enhanced social cohesion and municipal legitimacy.
- People talk less about services that improve (i.e. they complain more about problems than they discuss the solutions). When they do talk about improvements, they do not tend to relate them to refugees. In other words, *they tend to relate their problems to refugees more than the solutions to those problems.*
- Relieving resource pressures reduces the tendency to 'blame' the refugees; but this may displace refugee complaints onto the next-most-pressing problem. Satisfaction with service does not per se equal enhanced social cohesion.
- There are key differences between the way people perceive improvements in water and sewerage services and the way they perceive improvements in roads, bridges and youth facilities. In this report we have hypothesised that these differences relate to
 - a. the notion that water and sewerage improvements aim to reduce the "shortage of a shortage" of a service, where roads, bridges and youth facilities are perceived more as a positive "extra" benefit; and
 - b. that services delivered 'externally' (in the public space) are perceived differently from those delivered 'internally' (into the home).

Additional monitoring over time is needed to test these hypotheses; but there may be important considerations for programming.

- Project implementation appears to have an impact on perceptions not only in the project focus area (i.e. in stories about that service) but more widely. It is not necessarily the case that spending more generates the greatest social cohesion dividend. Fixing two bridges (\$55k) generated similar shifts in perception to the installation of a sewerage system (279\$k). Bigger is not necessarily better.
- Delivery of one service by the municipality tends to improve perceptions of the municipality in other thematic areas; but also raises expectations that the municipality *could* deliver wider improvements. It will be useful to monitor the effect of project implementation over time to assess whether increased expectations of state service provision lead, over time, to a decrease in satisfaction with the state.
- Receipt of improved services tends to reduce people's tendency to 'take direct action'. This may be a positive indication of a reduction in conflict; but it may also signal a reduced reliance on coping strategies. Further research could seek to identify the existence, use and value of different coping strategies, the impact these strategies have on resilience, and the effect of improved state service provision on coping as a response.
- The quantity of projects being delivered across Lebanon's municipalities is vast, as is the number of donors and implementing partners. Agreement on the outcome and impact level objectives of this programming in terms of social cohesion and

stability, and greater integration of project data, is likely to help maximise the results of DFID and other donor investment.

1 Background

On behalf of DFID and in close collaboration with UNDP, Aktis Strategy conducted two rounds of field research for the monitoring and evaluation of DFID-funded interventions under the Lebanon Municipal Support Programme (LMSP). The purpose of this research was to establish whether linkages exist between projects designed to reduce service delivery pressures in communities under stress as a result of the Syrian refugee influx and the level of tension between Syrian refugees and Lebanese host community members.

In addition, the implementation of the projects by the municipalities is designed to improve citizens' perceptions of the capability and responsiveness of municipal government in addressing their priority service delivery needs. A parallel aim of the research is therefore to evaluate the effect of the projects, if any, on respondents' perceptions of the legitimacy of municipal government in the project locations.

2 Methodology

The impact evaluation used the same methodology as for the baseline, the research tool SenseMaker®. As described in the baseline report, SenseMaker® elicits 'micro-narratives' (stories) from respondents about their own direct experience in the area of the research. Respondents then signify the meaning their story holds for them against a pre-developed signification framework. Demographic data is also captured to allow the sense-making data to be correlated and disaggregated by age, gender, confession etc. When repeated over time, shifts in patterns indicate changes in perception and attitude which can help inform project planning.

2.1 Research sample selection

During the project inception phase, Aktis facilitated relevant stakeholders in a selection process to identify the 3 municipalities where the research would take place. The selection was based on the following criterion:

1. Project activation time (to ensure that services will come on line before the impact evaluation).
2. Whether projects relate directly to the problems caused by refugee pressure.
3. Visibility of projects, both in the delivery stage and in terms of their outputs.
4. The extent to which the projects have a specific and local geographic focus.
5. Accessibility of research locations.

This resulted in the selection of six project which were implemented between the baseline research (September/October 2014) and the impact evaluation (January 2015).

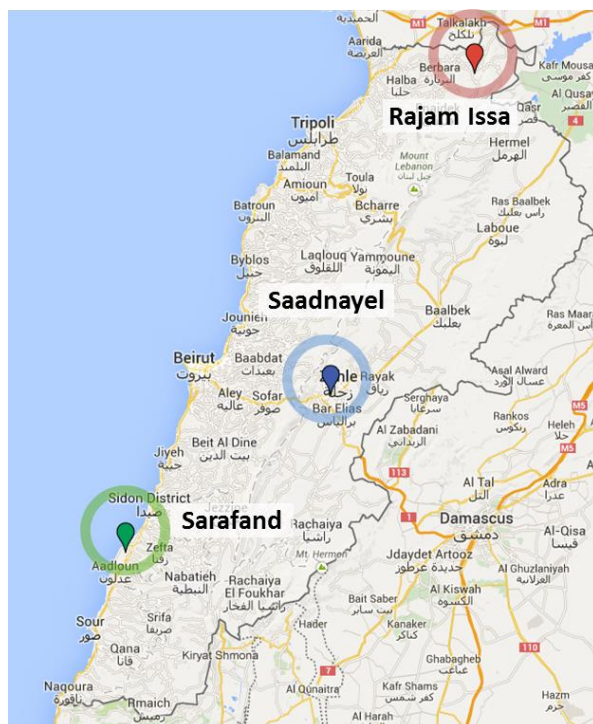
- **Project 1:** Strengthening the capacity of Saadnayel Municipality in promoting social cohesion through sports facilities for youth
- **Project 2:** Enhancing the transportation system and the road network in Saadnayel

- **Project 3:** Improving sustainable access to quality water in Sarafand
- **Project 4:** Comprehensive water management for better hygiene and health conditions in Bisariyeh
- **Project 5:** Improving the liquid and solid waste management system to improve quality of health in Amayer.

2.2 Respondent demographics and key data

Research for the impact evaluation was carried out in the same 3 communities as for the baseline: one in the North, one in Bekaa and one in the South. In total 778 responses were collected.

The tables below show the demographics and key data for the 3 communities for both the baseline and impact evaluation.



Rajam Issa (North)



Sewerage

Connect Rajam Issa (220 housing units) to the sewerage network (2071m).
Dfid cost ~\$279k

Confession

100% Sunni.

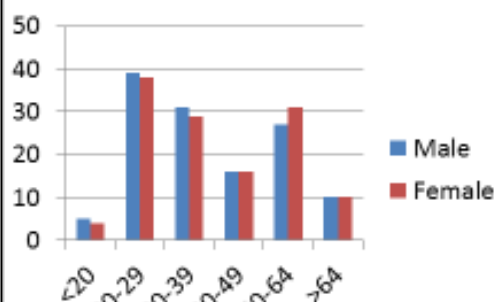
Population

Lebanese ~3200. Syrian ~2000 (63% increase due to refugees).

Nr of respondents

Baseline: 266 (233 men and 33 women). Age profile: Less than 20 (0%), 20-29 (8%), 30-39 (30%), 40-49 (45%), 50-64 (17%)
Impact: 257 (128 men and 129 women). Age profile: Less than 20 (4%), 20-29 (30%), 30-39 (23%), 40-49 (12%), 50-64 (23%), over 64 (8%)

257 respondents in Rajam Issa (North) by Age and Gender



Awareness of projects

None:
Water supply:
Roads / Bridges:
Sanitation:

Baseline

144 people (54%)
68 people (26%)
43 people (16%)
19 people (7%)

Impact

4 people (2%)
39 people (15%)
28 people (11%)
252 people (98%)

Stories included

Jobs/Employment:
Sewerage:
Security:

119 people (45%)
56 people (21%)
24 people (9%)

94 people (37%)
37 people (14%)
44 people (17%)

Stories influenced by

Refugees:
Government:
Political Leaders:

202 people (76%)
136 people (51%)
70 people (26%)

123 people (48%)
56 people (22%)
10 people (4%)

Saadnayel (Bekaa)



Roads / Bridges

Rehabilitation of the two bridges over the Al Berdawni river.
Dfid cost ~\$55k

Youth / Facilities

Establishment of a football playground, a basketball court and a tennis court.
Dfid cost ~\$135k

Confession

97% Sunni, 2% Shia, 1% Other

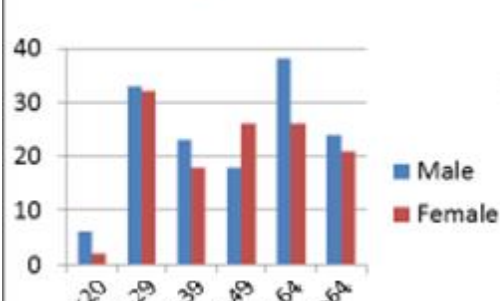
Population

Lebanese ~25,000. Syrian ~11,570.
46% increase due to refugees

Nr of respondents

Baseline: 253 (183 men and 70 women). Age profile: Less than 20 (3%), 20-29 (19%), 30-39 (27%), 40-49 (36%), 50-64 (15%)
Impact: 267 (142 men and 125 women). Age profile: Less than 20 (3%), 20-29 (24%), 30-39 (15%), 40-49 (17%), 50-64 (24%), over 64 (17%)

267 respondents in Saadnayel (Bekaa) by Age and Gender



Awareness of projects

None:
Water supply:
Roads / Bridges:
Youth Facilities:

Baseline

182 people (72%)
61 people (24%)
6 people (2%)
6 people (2%)

Impact

40 people (15%)
60 people (22%)
94 people (35%)
100 people (37%)

Stories included

Jobs/Employment:
Security:
Sewerage:

133 people (53%)
75 people (30%)
28 people (11%)

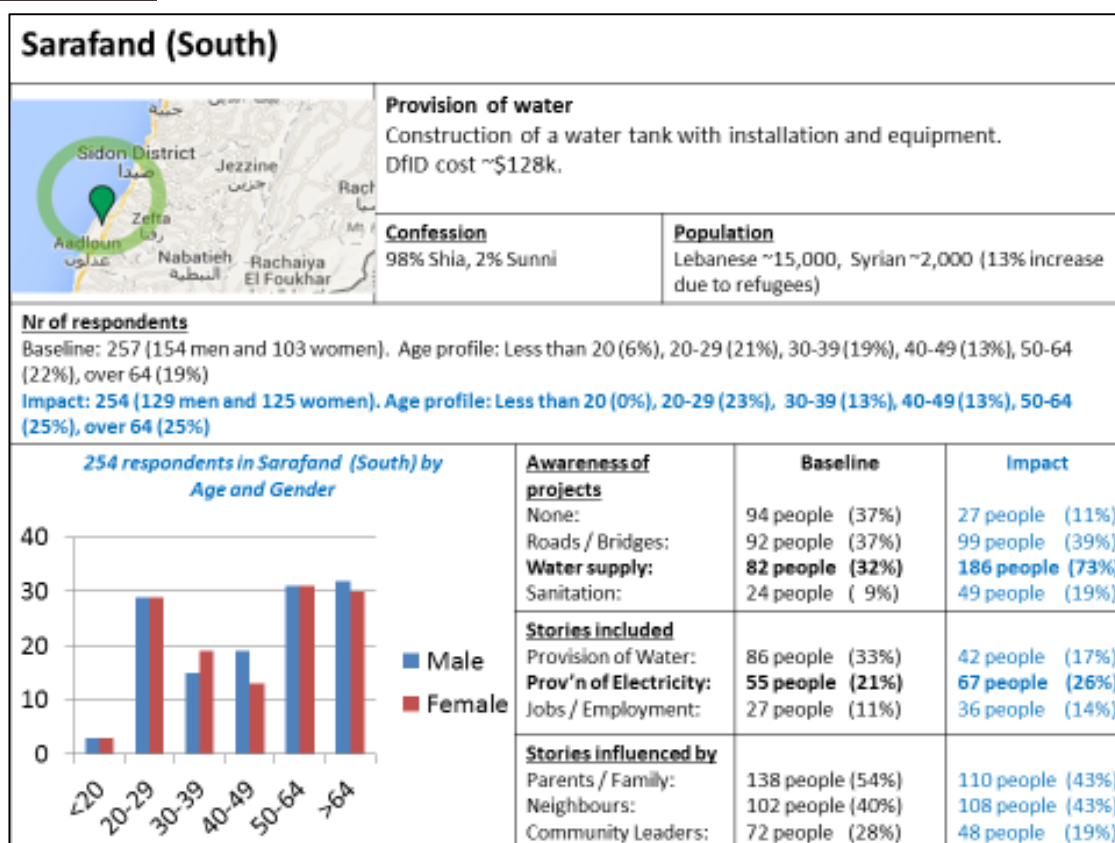
95 people (36%)
48 people (18%)
29 people (11%)

Stories influenced by

Refugees:
Government:
Political Leaders:

225 people (89%)
60 people (24%)
34 people (13%)

181 people (68%)
47 people (18%)
12 people (4%)



2.3 SenseMaker® workshops

The SenseMaker® analysis workshop is an integral part of the research methodology. Aktis facilitated analysis workshops after both the baseline and impact evaluation. During the workshops, stakeholders worked together to 'make sense' of the data, analysing changes in patterns and clusters to inform reporting and propose areas for further analysis.

In addition, Aktis facilitated SenseMaker® workshops in the three target areas (North, South, Bekaa), attended by local government officials, area-level MoSA officials and representatives from NGO implementing partners. The key findings and conclusions of the regional workshops are in Annex A.

2.4 Other projects in the research municipalities

According to the UNDP project database, the following projects in areas relevant to the service studied in this research were conducted in or around the research period:

	Service Area	Project	Implementing Partners
Rajam Issa	Education	Access to formal and informal education	SCI Lebanon
Saadnayel	WASH	Hygiene promotion	Beyond Reform and Development Norwegian Refugee Council

Sarafand	WASH	Hygiene items Access to water Access to storage containers	Beyond Reform and Development Norwegian Refugee Council
	Education	Access to formal and informal education Rehabilitation of schools	Norwegian Refugee Council

It is worth noting that whilst the UNDP database is a comprehensive record of projects implemented under the LCRP there may be many other projects implemented by a range of donors (e.g. US government via NGOs) which are not recorded in the database and which may influence the results of the SenseMaker® research.

Note: Definition of Services and Non-Services

Stories are disaggregated by theme (what they are about) and region to compare attitudes to different sorts of problems and situations in different settings. In this analysis, we frequently compare attitudes to 'service delivery issues' with attitudes to 'non-service delivery issues', defined as follows:

Service Delivery Issues	Non-Service Delivery Issues
Water Electricity Sewerage Education Youth facilities Roads and bridges	Security Politics Flooding Jobs/employment

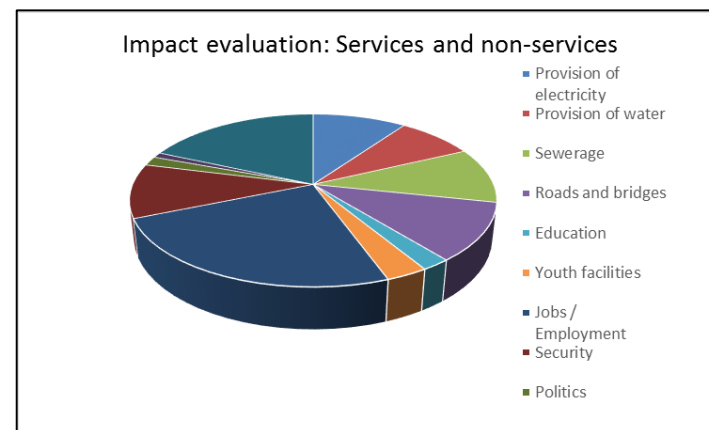
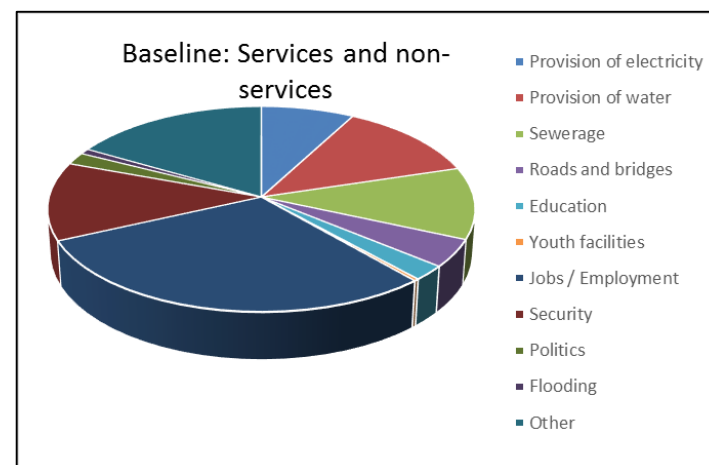
3 Impact evaluation

3.1 Quality of services and access to services:

This analysis is intended to assess which types of service or non-service related issues correlated with the greatest changes in attitude and perception. It also explores the changes in the data reflecting the relationship between changes in services and perceptions of refugees.

Have the services people are talking about changed after project implementation?

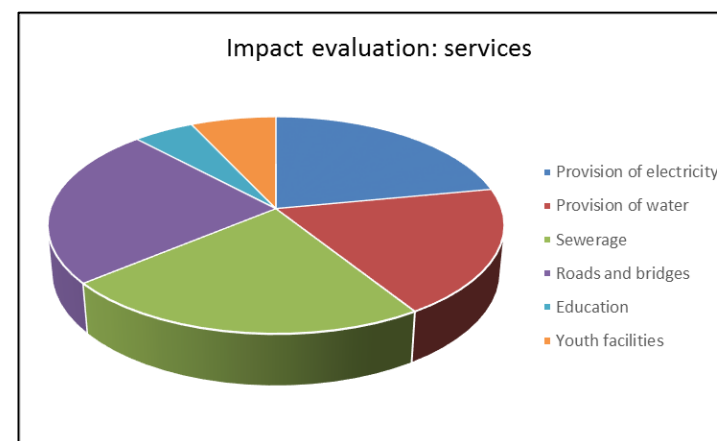
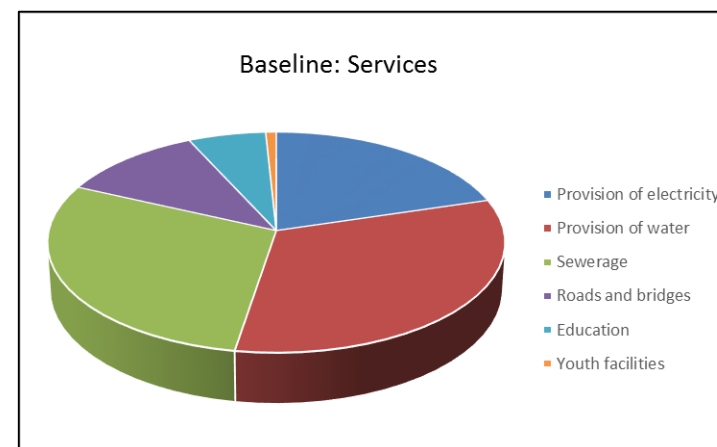
In the baseline research, 47% of respondents' stories included reference to services and service delivery¹, against 53% which referred to other issues (e.g. security, jobs, politics). In the impact evaluation this proportion was not significantly changed (55% of respondents' stories included services and service delivery). The types of issues that people overall were talking about did not significantly change either: jobs and employment remains the overall most mentioned issue, indicating that it remains the most significant issue to Lebanese host communities.



¹ Provision of electricity, provision of water, sewerage, roads and bridges, education, youth facilities.

Within the different services, overall there have been some changes in the proportions of respondents talking about the different service areas. Responses are broken down further by service and location in the following pages. This table shows the breakdown of all service related stories in the baseline and impact assessments:

Service Area	Baseline assessment	Impact evaluation
Sewerage	29%	23%
Water	33%	19%
Roads and Bridges	11%	24%
Electricity	20%	22%
Youth Facilities	1%	7%



In the table on the right we have further broken down the changes in the patterns by municipality to establish whether people are referring more or less to different services in their municipality.

Rajam Issa

Compared to the baseline data, a significantly lower proportion of respondents in the North tell stories involving sewerage (the service enhanced by the DFID-funded project) in the impact assessment. This is offset by an increase in references to water, roads/bridges and electricity.

Saadnayel

We see a major increase in the proportion of respondents talking about roads and bridges and youth facilities, the DFID focus project areas. Stories about water, electricity and sewerage have declined, proportionately.

Sarafand

In Sarafand, where the focus project was designed to increase access to water, there has been a marked decrease (from 49% to 25%) in people talking about water. Proportionately, stories about roads and bridges and electricity have increased.

Rajam Issa		
Service Area	Baseline assessment	Impact evaluation
Sewerage	49%	32%
Water	16%	20%
Roads and Bridges	13%	18%
Electricity	9%	14%
Youth Facilities	-	2%
Saadnayel		
Service Area	Baseline assessment	Impact evaluation
Sewerage	42%	24%
Water	22%	10%
Roads and Bridges	16%	36%
Electricity	13%	7%
Youth Facilities	4%	23%
Sarafand		
Service Area	Baseline assessment	Impact evaluation
Sewerage	12%	17%
Water	49%	25%
Roads and Bridges	8%	20%
Electricity	30%	38%
Youth Facilities	-	-

What does this mean?

In the areas in which sewerage and water projects were implemented, stories about those services have declined markedly, where in Saadnayel, where he projects rehabilitated two bridges and constructed youth sports facilities, the pattern is reversed – many more people refer to those services in their stories.

In the case of water and sewerage, in the baseline most of the stories were negative, where in the impact assessment the remaining stories were much more positive in nature (see page 13 below). In other words, it seems that far fewer people are likely to complain about shortages in these services when they are improved - but instead of relating a positive improvement, they switch their focus to the 'next most pressing problem', and relate another negative story. This does not mean that they are not happy to have received the additional service, or do not feel the benefit – simply that they have other problems which continue to negatively affect their lives.

The emergence of the reverse pattern in the case of roads and bridges and youth facilities is interesting. We hypothesise that these projects are more conspicuous and deal less with mitigating a shortage (or increasing the "absence of an absence" of a service), and more with delivering new benefits. This needs to be assessed in other projects over time, but if this is the case, there may be useful implications for programming designed to enhance community confidence and sense of well-being.

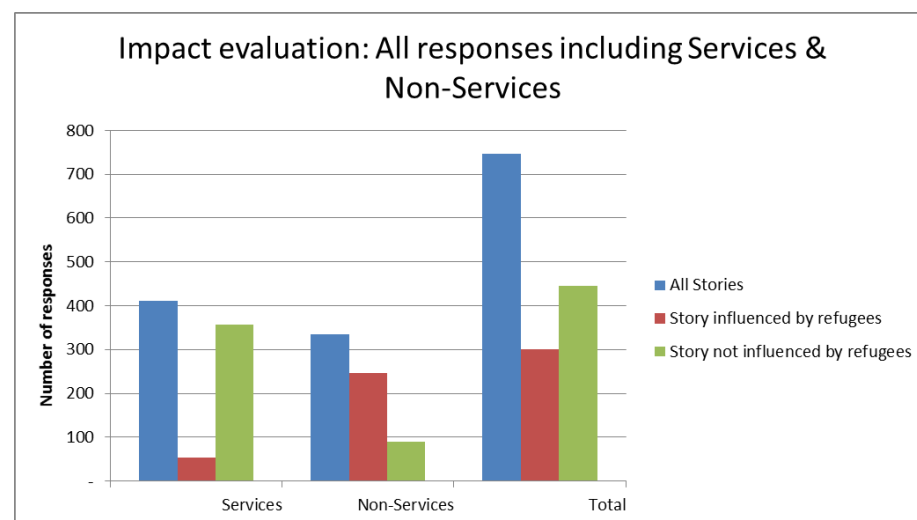
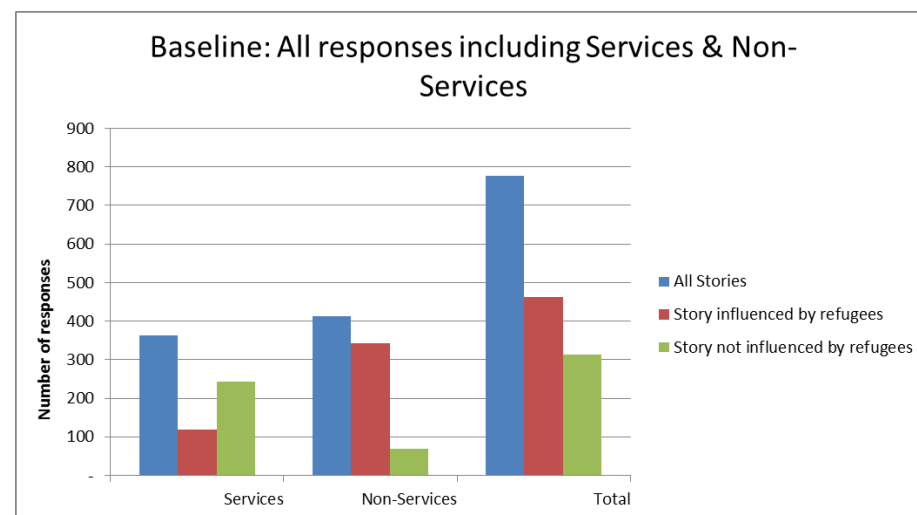
Have the projects affected whether people relate changes in their community to the refugees?

Of all stories, in the baseline assessment respondents considered a majority to relate to the refugee issue (60% were signified as 'including refugees', against 40% 'not including refugees'). In the impact evaluation, there was a reversal of this pattern, with only 40% of stories considered to relate to refugees.

There was a shift to more people talking about services, but only 13% of the stories were signified as relating to refugees: down from 33% in the baseline.

In terms of non-service delivery areas, 73% of the stories were related to the refugees with 27% not including refugees. This is also a decrease from the baseline where 83% of non-service delivery stories related to refugees, though this decline is less marked than in the case of services.

In other words, most of the decline in people relating their stories to refugees is in service related stories, and these account for a greater proportion of overall stories.

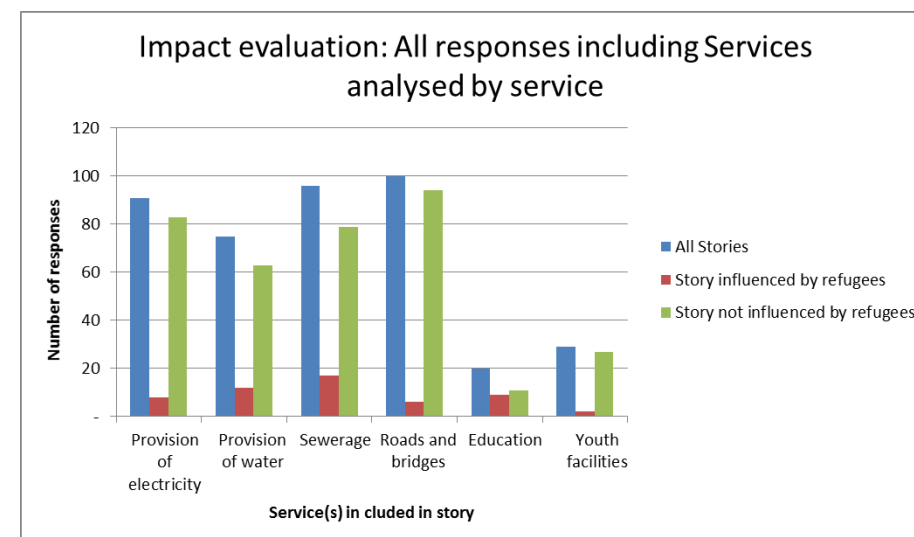
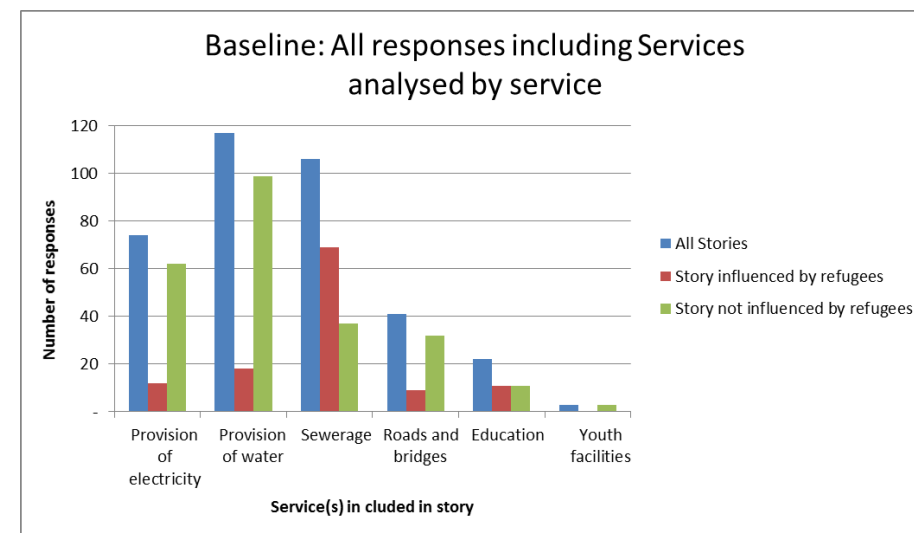


Breaking down this analysis by type of service, in the baseline the results showed that in the case of sewerage a majority of stories related to the refugee issue (65%, against 35% of sewerage stories which were considered not to involve refugees). In the impact evaluation, the number of people who mentioned sewerage remained high but there was a *significant decline* in the number of people who related their sewerage stories to refugees - to 18% against 82% of sewerage stories that did not involve refugees.

In Rajam Issa, where the focus project connected 220 households to the sewerage network, the baseline showed that 75% of the sewerage stories were related to refugees. After the project was implemented there was a *significant reduction* in this figure: only 5% of the sewerage stories were related to refugees.

In Saadnayel, only 3% of respondents talked about roads and bridges in the baseline, and 64% of these related their stories to refugees. Only 1% of the respondents mentioned youth facilities in the baseline, and none of them signified their stories as including refugees. In the impact evaluation there was an increase to 13% who told stories about roads and bridges, but a decline to only 9% of these stories relating to refugees. There was also an increase to 8% of respondents who talked about youth facilities, with 7% of those signified as relating to refugees.

Within provision of water, the DFID funded project in Sarafand, there was limited change in whether the water related stories related to refugees: from 2% in the baseline to none in the impact evaluation. In other words in neither research phase did Sarafand respondents significantly relate water issues to refugees.



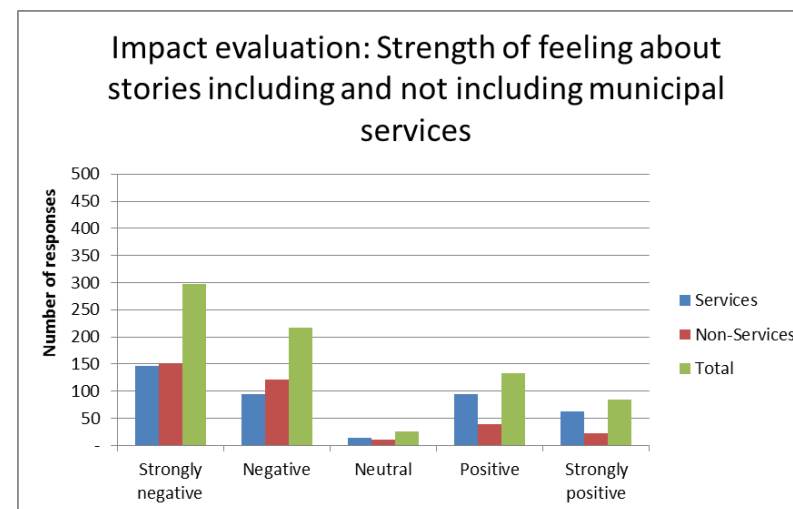
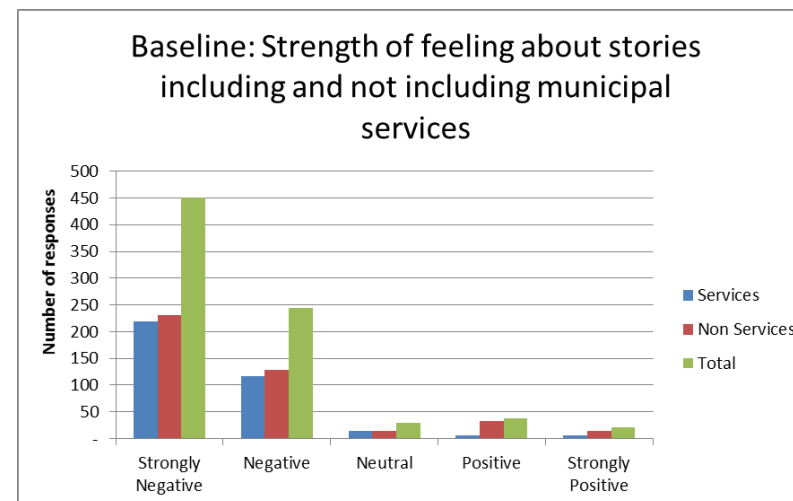
What does this mean?

It appears that people relate their priority *problems* to refugees; but when that problem is solved they tend to talk about it less (perhaps moving on to the next highest priority problem, as noted above) and of those who do talk about it, significantly fewer relate their story to refugees. In other words, people complain that their problems relate to refugees, but do not connect the solutions (leading to improvement in their circumstances) to refugees – perhaps because it does not occur to them that the services have been improved in response to the arrival of the refugees.

From a social cohesion perspective, a 70% decrease in people who related sewerage issues to refugees after implementation of a sewerage project can be interpreted in different ways. In one interpretation, it can be inferred that the project has helped relieve the pressure on the host community from the influx of refugees by reducing the extent to which people complain that the refugee influx has exacerbated sewerage problems by overloading the system. On the other, if people receive improved sewerage services but do not relate that to refugees, it may be that their refugee-related frustrations are simply displaced and redirected onto the next most pressing service shortage that they have.

Have the projects changed people's feeling of positivity in the project focus services vs. other service areas?

In the baseline assessment, 89% of all respondents felt 'strongly negative' or 'negative' about the story they told, whereas in the impact evaluation research this has decreased to 69% in all stories, both service and non-service-related; while overall there has been an increase in positive stories following the baseline relating to both services and other issues from 6% to 23%. There was in particular a significant proportionate increase in the 'strongly positive' and 'positive' stories relating to services - from 1% to 16%. Below, we analyse these patterns by region and service type to assess whether this trend towards telling more positive stories can be attributed to project implementation.



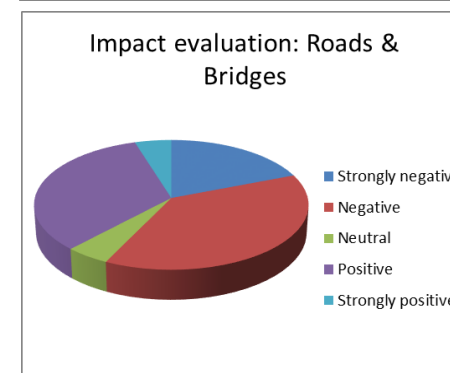
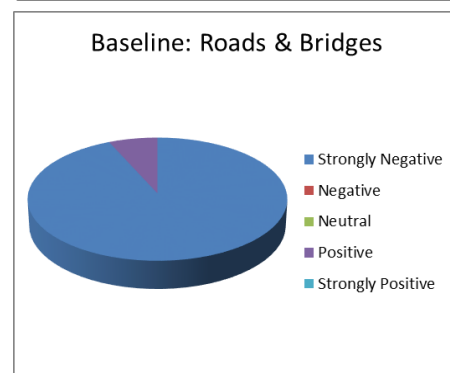
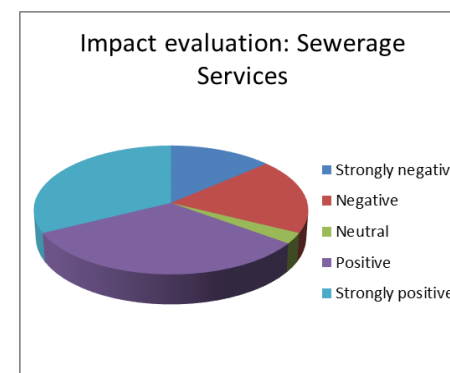
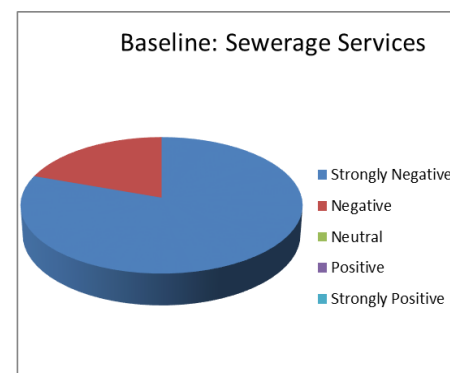
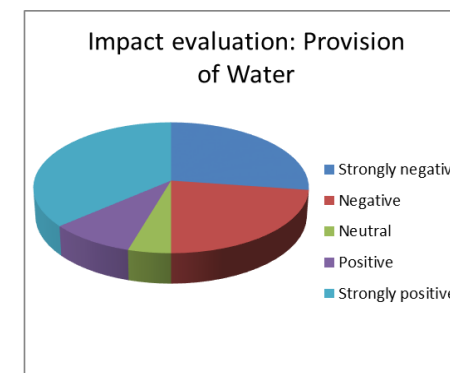
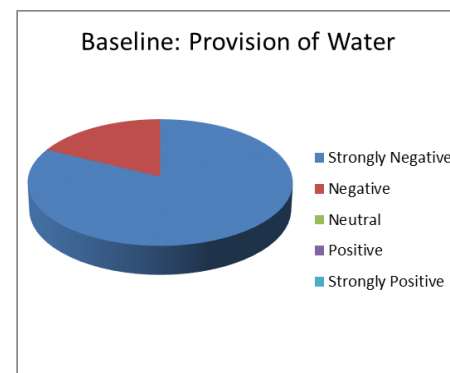
Rajam Issa

In Rajam Issa, sewerage (the focus of the DFID-funded project), roads and bridges and water were the most mentioned services by respondents in both the baseline and impact evaluation. The impact analysis indicates a significant change in the perception of these service areas since the baseline:

Sewerage: sewerage-related stories were 100% 'strongly negative' or 'negative' during the baseline. In the impact assessment 64% of respondents indicated that they felt 'strongly positive' and 'positive' in stories relating to sewerage – a very marked shift in attitude.

Provision of water: In the baseline, 100% of respondents signified stories relating to water as 'strongly negative' or 'negative'. In the impact evaluation there was a positive shift to 45% of the respondents saying they felt 'strongly positive' or 'positive' about the provision of water.

Roads and bridges: In the baseline, 94% of the respondents who told roads/bridges stories felt that those stories were 'strongly negative' and only 7% were 'positive'. In the impact evaluation, there was a decrease in negativity to 57% and an increase in 'strongly positive' and 'positive' to 38%.



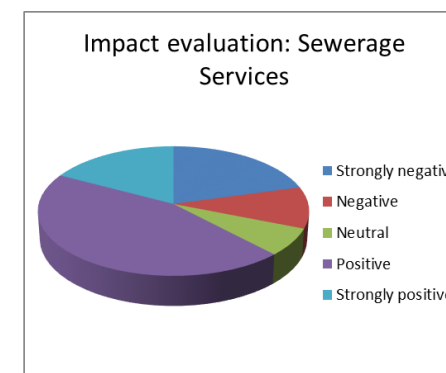
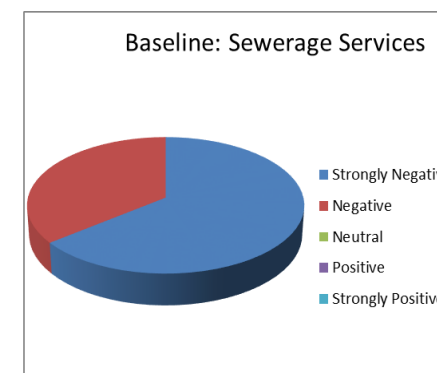
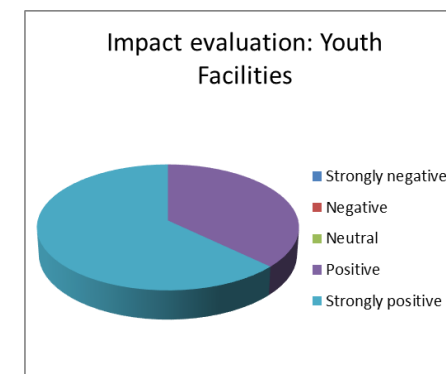
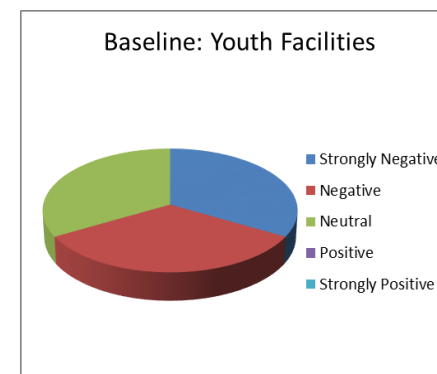
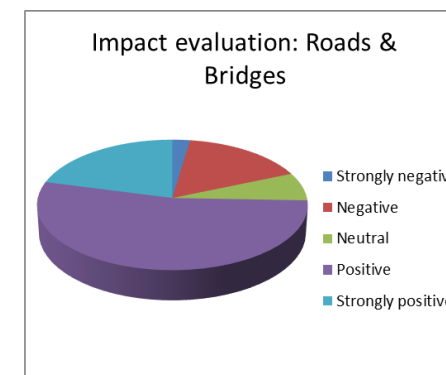
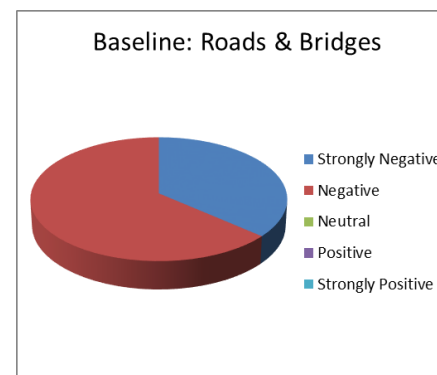
Saadnayel:

UNDP coordinated the implementation of two projects in Saadnayel in the research period, one rehabilitating two bridges and one building youth sports facilities. Apart from these two services, sewerage was the service that most respondents mentioned in the research.

Roads and bridges: Of respondents referring to roads and bridges in the baseline, 100% felt negative about the service. After the project was implemented, 74% of the respondents said that they felt 'strongly positive' or 'positive' about the service.

Youth Facilities: this service was mentioned by only by 4% of the respondents in Saadnayel in the baseline. Out of these, 67% felt negatively about the service and 33% felt 'neutral'. In the impact evaluation, youth facilities was mentioned by 23% of respondents and 100% of these respondents felt either 'strongly positive' or 'positive' about the facilities after the project has been implemented.

Sewerage: There was a clear shift in perception of sewerage from 100% negativity amongst respondents to 62% feeling positive about the service.



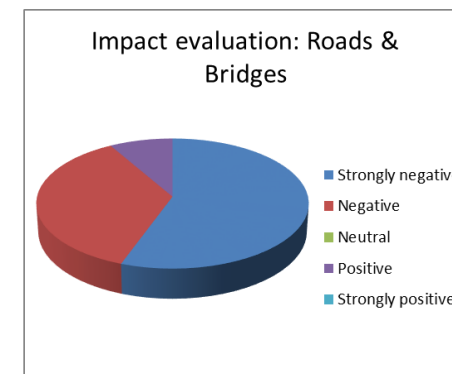
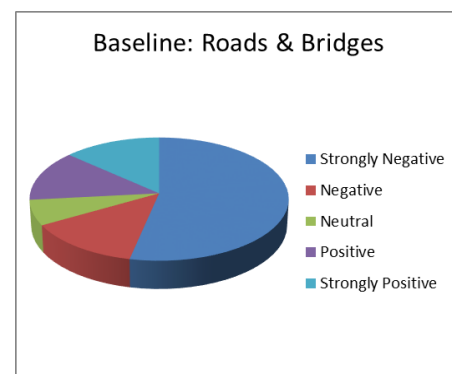
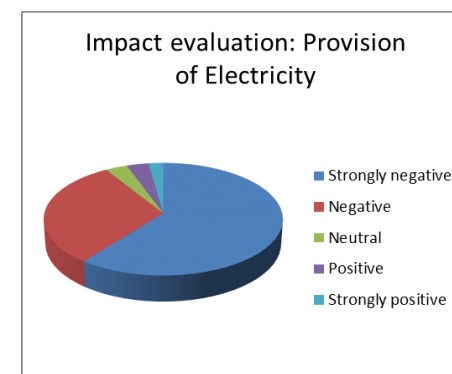
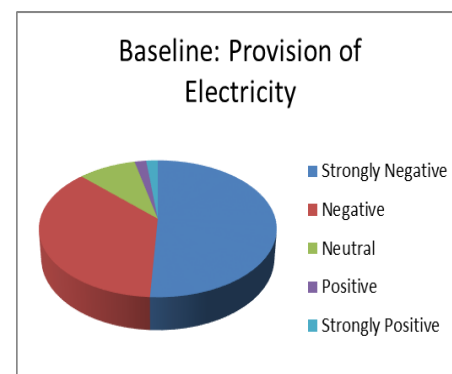
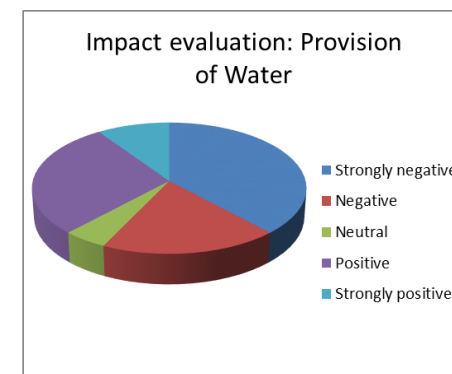
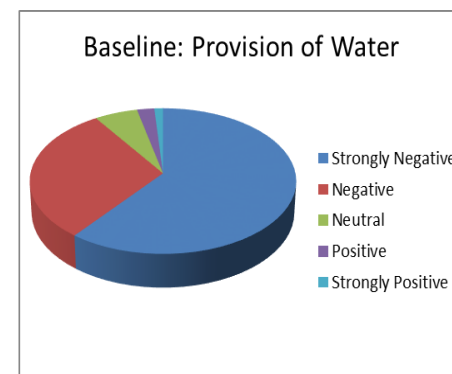
Sarafand:

In Sarafand electricity, water (the focus project service) and roads and bridges were the most mentioned services.

Provision of water: during the baseline, 49% of respondents related their stories to water and 90% of those respondents felt 'strongly negative' or 'negative' about the service. In the impact evaluation, as mentioned above, there was a significant decline to only 25% of respondents mentioning water (as noted above, this may be because the project has increased the 'absence of an absence', and residents therefore switch their focus other remaining problem areas). In the impact evaluation there was also a shift in perception to 39% of the people feeling 'strongly positive' or 'positive' about the service. However, 57% of the respondents still felt 'strongly negative' or negative about the provision of water after the project implementation.

Provision of electricity: In the baseline, 88% felt negatively about the electricity service with only 4% feeling positive and the remainder neutral. In the impact assessment there was an *increase* in negativity to 95% with only 1% of the respondents feeling 'positive' about electricity.

Roads and bridges: In the baseline, 67% of respondents felt 'strongly negative' or 'negative' about the service where in the impact evaluation there was an *increase* to 92% of the respondents feeling 'strongly negative' or 'negative' with only 8% who felt 'positive', down from 26%.



What does this mean?

There is no doubt that the projects have achieved a significant increase in the positivity of perception in the project service area. This change is most marked in the North (sewerage) and Bekaa (roads/bridges and youth facilities). The improvement in perception is still significant in the area of water provision in Sarafand, though the change is not as big. It is reasonable to conclude that the project outputs have had a positive impact on people's perceptions of those service areas.

The sense of positivity also increased in services which were not the DFID-funded project focus, although less so than in the project focus services. There are a number of potential explanations for this.

- Other projects were implemented in or around the research period which effected people's perceptions. In the case of Saadnayel, there were WASH projects which may be the reason for the improved perception of water services. It is possible that other projects were implemented in or around the research period which are not captured on the UNDP project database.
- In the case of water, local participants in the analysis commented that seasonal variation meant that this service was less of a problem in January than it had been in October.
- Projects may have a "contagion effect" on community perceptions – meaning that delivery of a benefit which citizens value leads to a more general increase in the sense of positivity when referring to other issues, service and non-service related. This hypothesis should be explored further, since it may have important implications for programming. If it is possible to leverage small projects to generate a wider effect across a range of subject areas there are likely to be effectiveness and efficiency benefits to the support programme.

The change in the impact on perceptions of positivity varies considerably from service area to service area, and between the three locations. The greatest shift is exhibited by the sewage project in the North; shifts in the North and Bekaa are greater than those in the South. We hypothesise from these patterns that:

- Certain types of service are more appreciated than others. Qualitative data from stories and feedback from the regional workshops suggests that these may be the services which communities cannot access for themselves, either through the private sector or by self-provision (e.g. people can buy a generator or pay a company for water, but sewerage, for example, requires a network which only a larger entity, i.e. the state, can provide).
- In some areas the start-point for people's expectations of service provision is lower than in others. Participants at the workshop in the North commented on the 'independence' of people in the area, who have the full expectation that they will meet their priority needs from their own resources, and through trading. By contrast, Sarafand has a much more developed history of service provision by the state and by other actors (see page 38), and it was commented that people have an *expectation* of service provision in a way which they do not in the North. It will be interesting to observe whether this shift to an expectation of service delivery occurs in the North as more and more services are provided, and if so what effect it has on people's perceptions of what they 'should' receive, and what it means to them when they receive it.

3.2 Well-being and tension

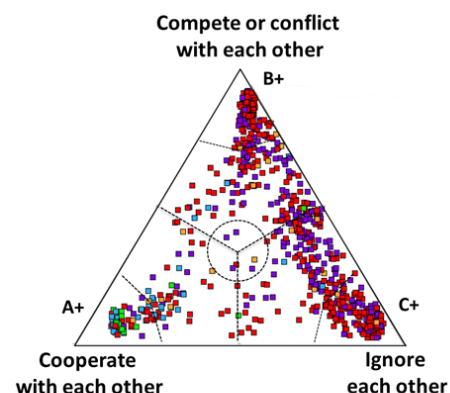
This analysis explores changes in respondents' sense of conflict/competition, feeling of empowerment, and potential reaction to issues in the stories being told (whether the approach to the problem is one of 'wait and see' or of 'taking direct action').

Has the sense of conflict changed?

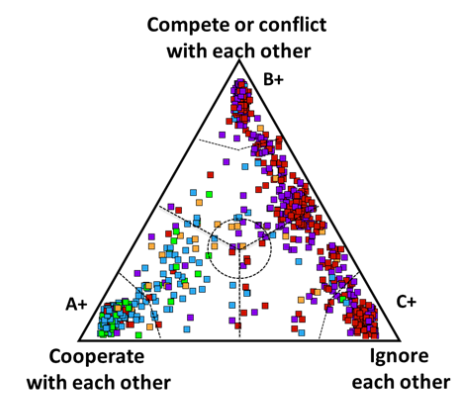
In the baseline 25% of all respondents expressed a strong sense of conflict or competition in their stories, with another 17% feeling some sense of conflict or competition in the story they told. Of the 25% of highly conflicted/competitive stories, 22% were about services, compared with 78% about other issues. Only 10% of respondents talked about situations or incidents in which people cooperated with one another.

Following project implementation, there was a marked increase (from 10% to 29% of all respondents) in people who expressed a strong sense of cooperation. As can be seen in the triads, there was also a greater shift in sentiment towards more positive stories amongst the people who felt a strong sense of cooperation. There was a 6% decrease in respondents who felt a strong sense of conflict or competition to 19%. Of these, only 13% of the 'conflict/competition' stories were about services with 87% relating to non-service areas – a change from a 22/78% service/non-service split in the baseline, indicating a substantially decreased sense of conflict in relation to services compared to non-services. It is worth noting respondents felt that jobs and employment was the issue most felt to involve conflict and competition, at 49% of all responses.

1. In the story, people ...



Baseline Evaluation



Impact Evaluation

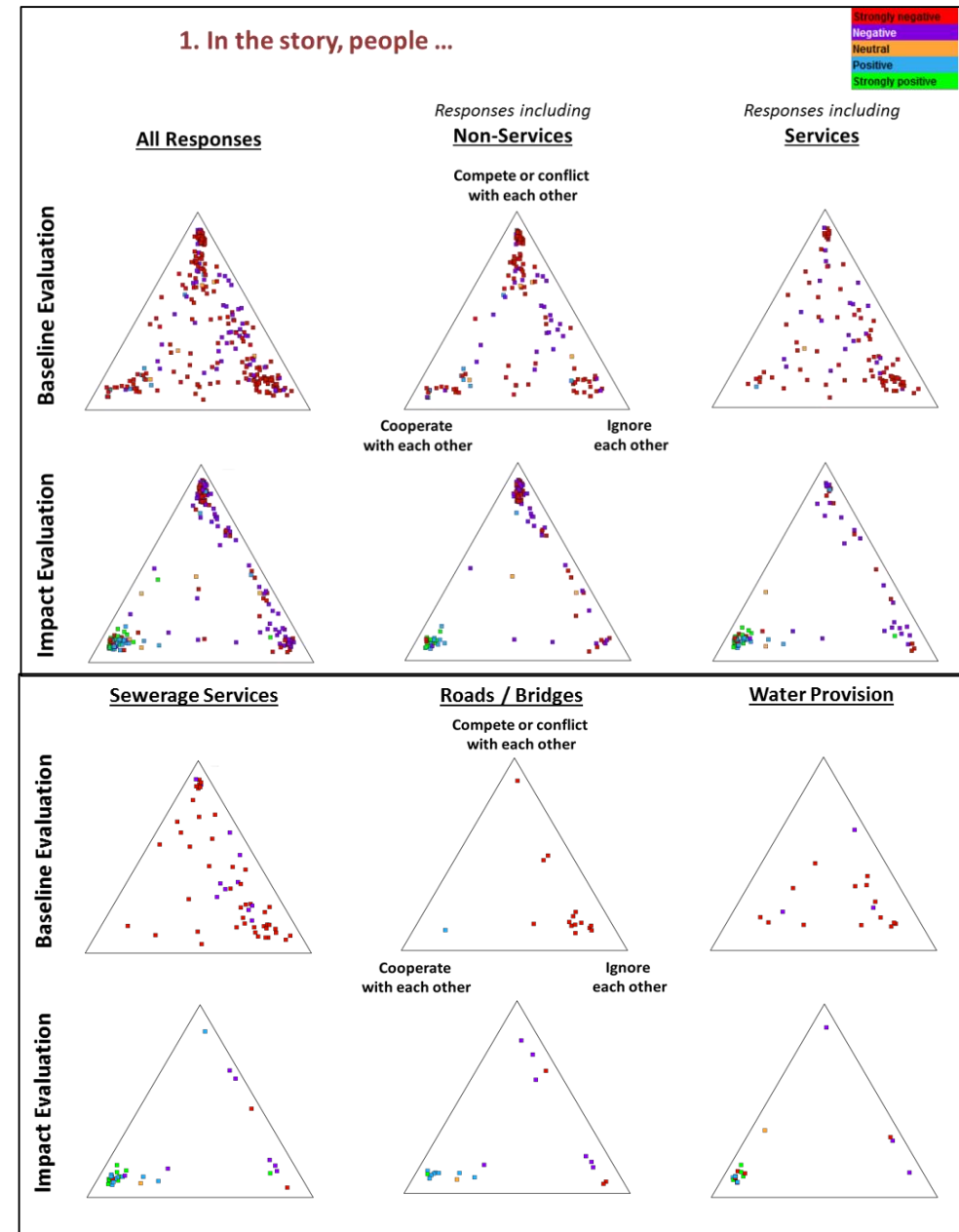


Breaking this triad down by region and service area, there has been a clear shift in the clusters between the baseline and the impact evaluation.

Rajam Issa:

In the North we observe:

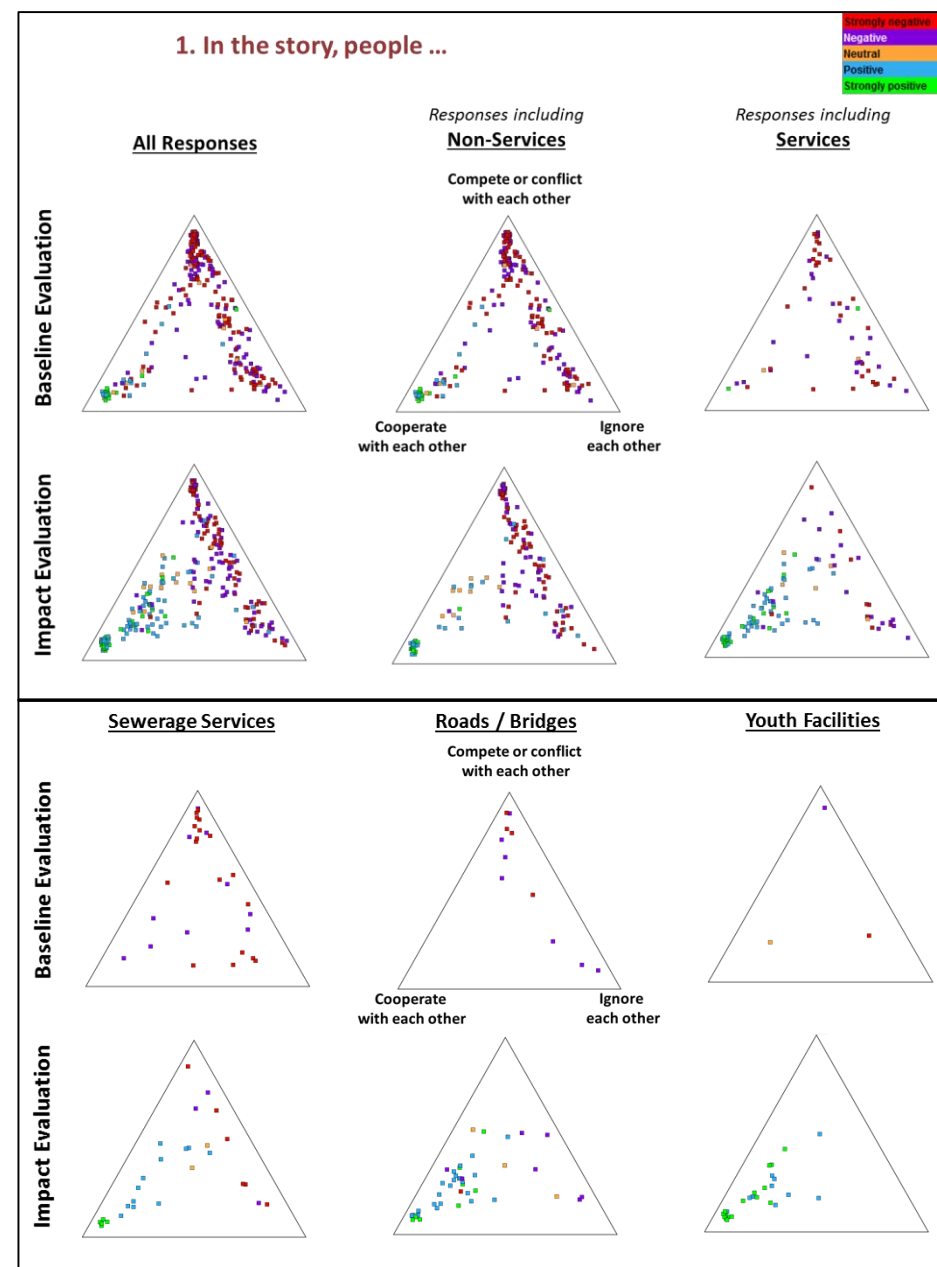
- A significant increase in the propensity of people to tell stories relating to cooperation, and in the positivity of those stories (though a cluster of 'conflict' stories remains, those stories tend to be less negative than in the baseline research phase).
- A greater increase in the sense of cooperation and reduction in the sense of conflict in stories relating to services than non-services – though non-service stories show greater positivity where they discuss cooperation, the number of 'cooperation' stories has not significantly increased.
- Among types of services analysed, the greatest shift towards 'cooperation' is seen in the area of sewerage, where only one story remains about conflict. Lesser but still significant positive shifts are also observable in the areas of roads/bridges and water provision.



Saadnayel:

Most of the stories in the baseline showed that the few stories relating to roads and bridges and youth facilities were in the compete/conflict corner. After the projects had been implemented there was a marked increase in the number of stories about these service areas (i.e. people noticed and talked about the projects) and in these stories respondents are both positive and signify a sense of cooperation others. We observe that:

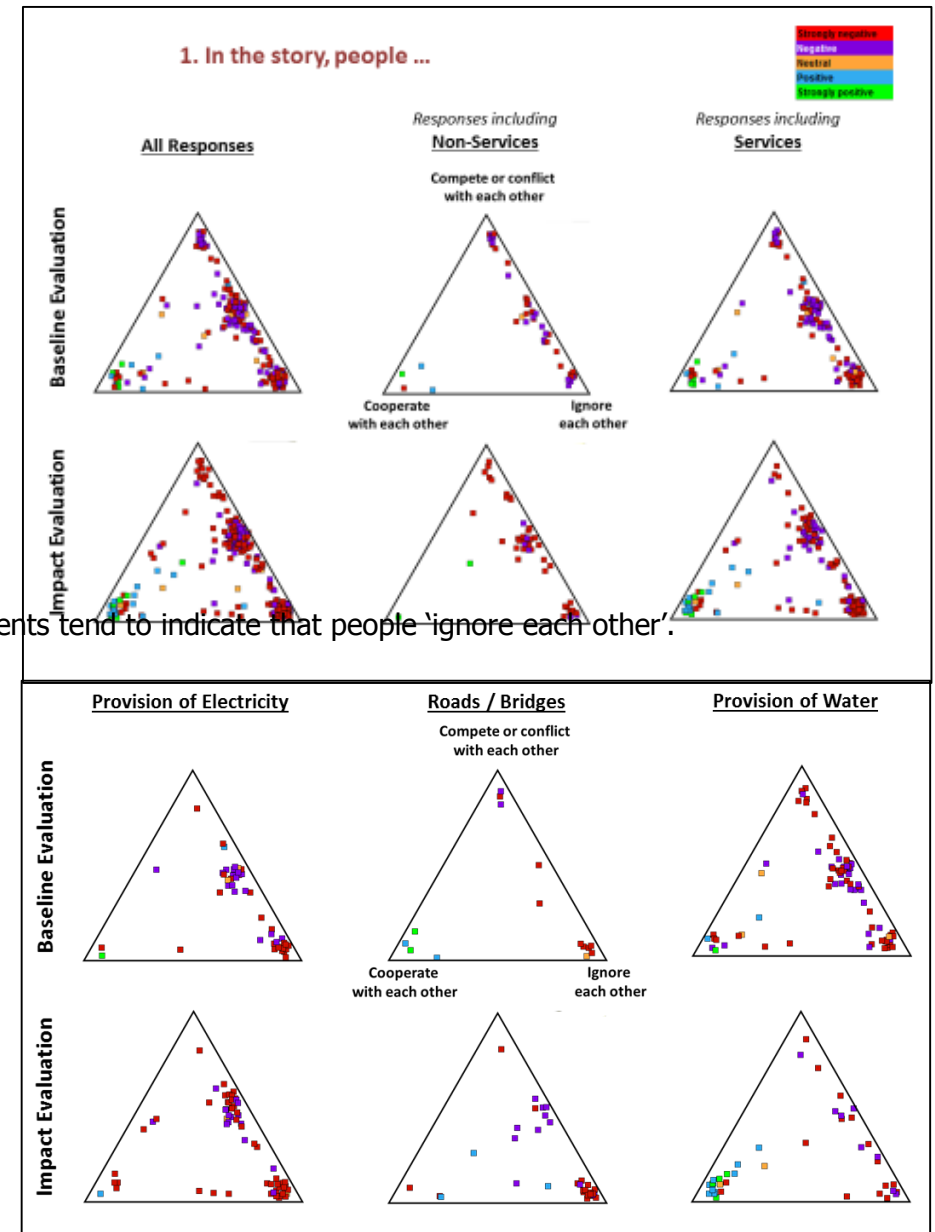
- A marked move from conflict to cooperation is evident, and a major increase in positive or strongly positive stories.
- This change is particularly true in the case of service-related stories, which show a very significant move away from 'conflict' and 'ignoring'.
- Stories about roads/bridges and youth facilities account for most of this shift, with a very marked shift to cooperation. There are many more stories about youth facilities in the impact research than in the baseline research, and all are positive or strongly positive.



Sarafand:

Sarafand exhibited a less clear shift in the service related areas most mentioned by respondents. After the water project had been implemented, more respondents indicated a sense of cooperation in water-related stories and fewer reported conflict or competition; but the difference is not as marked as in other areas. We observe:

- A move towards stories involving cooperation and a reduction in stories involving conflict, though this shift is considerably less marked than in the North and Bekaa research.
- That the shift from conflict to cooperation is almost all in the case of service delivery stories. Non-service stories (politics, security etc) show little change over the period between the baseline and impact research.
- Electricity-related stories evoke strong feelings of negativity, but respondents tend to indicate that people 'ignore each other'.



What does this mean?

The data indicates that the sense of conflict has significantly reduced, and the sense of cooperation increased, in the thematic areas of project implementation in all three locations, with very marked shifts in the North and Bekaa, and a less marked effect in Sarafand. As well as a reduced sense of conflict there is also a reduced tendency to relate conflict and competition to the presence of refugees. It is reasonable to hypothesise that the implementation of the focus projects has reduced the sense of conflict in the project-related areas, and the sense in which remaining perceived conflict is associated with refugee influx.

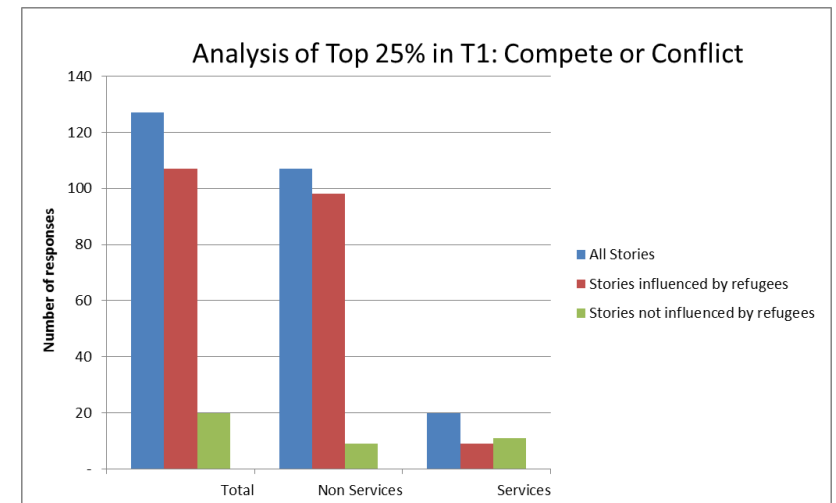
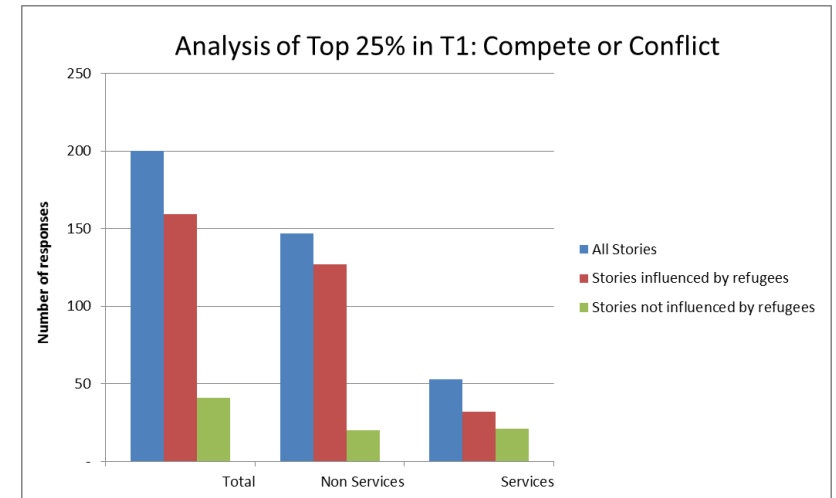
It is also apparent that there has also been a reduction (though less marked) in the sense of conflict in stories relating to services *other than* those on which the projects were focused. This is likely to be at least in part down to the fact that the focus (DFID-funded) projects were not the only interventions in the research areas. It may also, however, be attributable to the 'contagion effect' hypothesised above.

There is a correlation between the reduction in respondents' sense of conflict and the level of awareness of the project. The data show that in Rajam Issa the level of awareness of sewerage projects was 98% of respondents (up from 2% in the baseline assessment). In Sarafand only 19% of respondents were aware of water projects (up from 9%). These results correlate to changes in the sense of conflict, and this sense of reduced conflict is likely to relate, therefore, to *knowledge* of projects, as well as the benefits citizens derive from the service outputs themselves. This may have important implications for "soft" project components, e.g. consultation, awareness raising and project communications.

How do changes in the sense of conflict or competition relate to refugees?

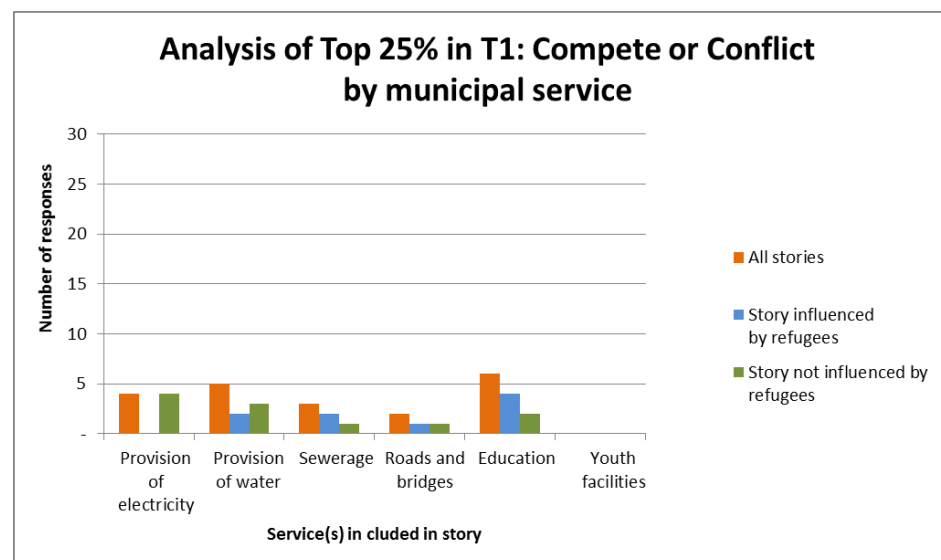
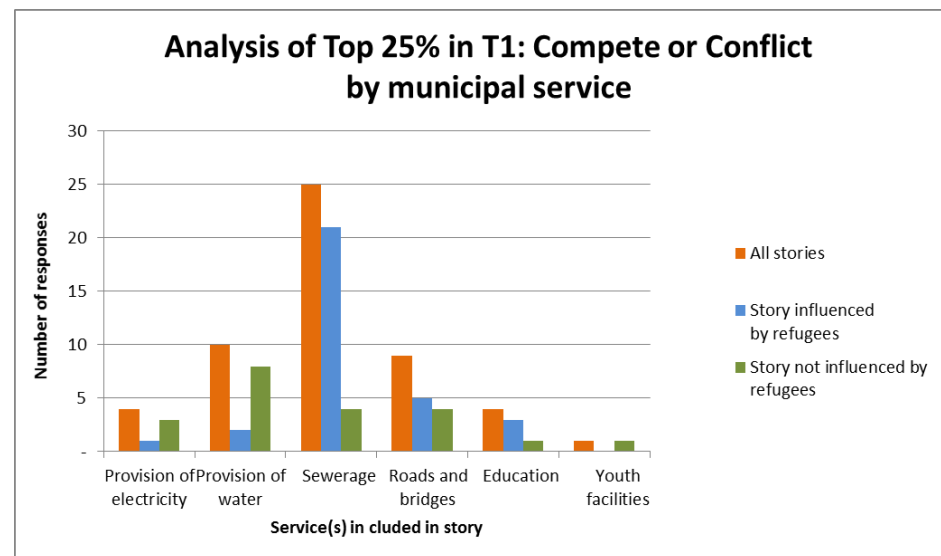
In the baseline assessment, of the respondents who told stories that involved a sense of conflict or competition, 80% were considered by respondents to involve refugees, against 20% which were considered not to involve refugees.

The impact evaluation showed limited changes in this overall pattern. 79% (down from 80%) of all respondents who felt a sense of conflict or competition in their stories denoted that those stories involved refugees. There was however a marked *decline* in the number of people telling service related stories who felt that their story related to refugees: from 17% to 7%. Conversely, the proportion of conflict stories that included refugees in non-service areas increased from 83% to 92%.



Breaking the results down into types of services, the baseline assessment showed that 79% of sewerage stories which evoked a sense of conflict involved refugees against 21% which did not involving refugees. In the impact evaluation, the proportion of conflict/competition stories involving refugees *decreased* to 44% involved refugees against 66% that did not involve refugees. In other service areas, the 31% of 'conflict' stories related to refugees in the baseline assessment *increased* to 43% in the impact evaluation.

Out of both service and non-service issues, jobs/employment remained the area that most respondents felt involved a sense of conflict and refugees, with a slight increase from 49% at the baseline to 53% at the impact evaluation.



What does this mean?

Above we noted that it appears that people relate their priority *problems* to refugees; but when that problem is *solved* they tend to talk about it less (perhaps moving on to the next highest priority problem, as noted above) and of those who do talk about it, significantly fewer relate their story to refugees. This pattern appears to hold true for stories which evoke a sense of conflict or competition – when the sense of conflict reduces, the tendency also reduces to relate that story to refugees.

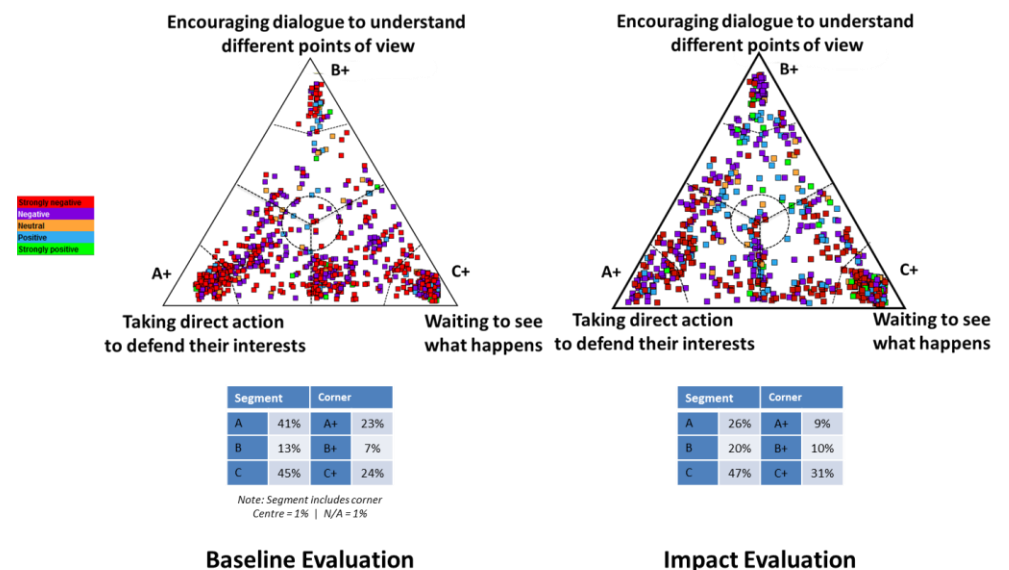
From a social cohesion perspective, it can be inferred that the projects have reduced the sense that conflict or competition is due to the refugee influx – i.e. that those people that still feel a sense of conflict or competition are less likely to complain that the refugee influx has exacerbated service shortfalls.

Do people who receive additional services change their tendency to take direct action?

Out of all responses, the baseline assessment showed that 23% of the respondents felt a strong sense that the people in their stories reacted by 'taking direct action to defend their interest'. Another 18% felt some sense of 'taking direct action'. There was also a strong cluster of people who signified that they would 'wait to see what happens' (24%). Only 7% of the respondents signified that they would strongly 'encourage dialogue to understand different points of view'.

In the impact evaluation there was a significant *decrease* (to 9%) in respondents who strongly signified that they would 'take direct action'. The clusters from the baseline have been somewhat dispersed and there are slightly more respondents who felt strongly that the people in their stories reacted by 'encouraging dialogue' at 10%. There was an increase from 24% to 31% of people who said that they reacted to social issues by 'waiting to see what happens'.

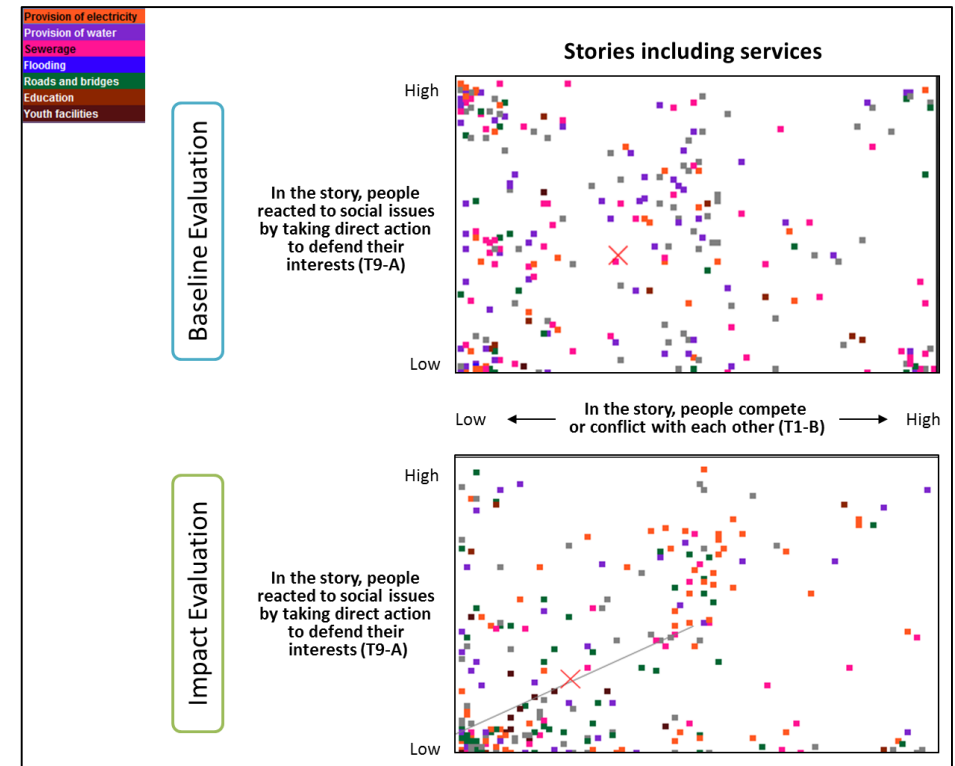
9. In the story, people reacted to social issues by ...



Has the response to conflict issues changed? Are people taking direct action?

Stories involving conflict or competition were compared with the respondent's interpretation of whether the people in the story reacted to social issues by 'taking direct action to defend their interests' in the different service areas. In the baseline, most respondents who signalled taking direct action did not tell stories which reflected a sense of conflict. However, a small number of respondents did make this connection; this is shown by the cluster of responses at the top right hand side of the first diagram opposite.

In the impact evaluation, this cluster has dispersed, indicating that people who interpreted their stories as involving a high-degree of competition or conflict with others are less likely to take direct action. This pattern is mirrored in stories which do not involve a sense of conflict. As shown on the previous page, there is an overall gravitation towards a tendency for service related stories to correspond with 'waiting to see'.



What does this mean?

In the baseline assessment we hypothesised that the cluster of correspondents who signified their stories as between 'direct action' and 'wait and see' may represent a conflict tipping point. In the impact analysis this cluster is reduced, with a corresponding increase in the 'wait and see' stories. It may be that the additional services provided have led to an increase in confidence that their basic needs will be met, reducing the tendency to take direct action and increasing their sense of patience resilience.

It is not necessarily the case that 'taking direct action' implies an action which brings people into conflict – many communities have adopted coping strategies by which they meet their own needs without the assistance of government or other external actors. A reduced tendency to take direct action may imply that citizens feel less compelled to adopt these independent coping strategies.

This finding and its implications should be analysed through further phases of research to establish whether this hypothesis is borne out over time, in response to a range of projects in different areas; and whether a reduction in a tendency to adopt coping strategies is a positive indicator of resilience. In particular, future research should seek to identify the existence, use and value of different coping strategies, the impact these strategies have on resilience, and the

3.3 Attribution, perceived capacity and legitimacy

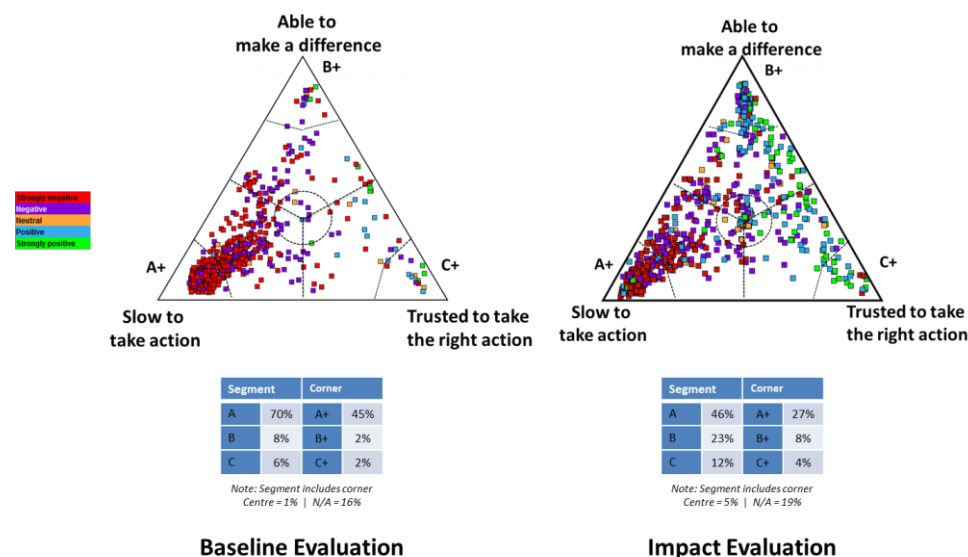
In this section we look at whether project implementation has affected people's perception of the municipalities' capability and trustworthiness, and whether people consider that their municipal government could improve their situation. We consider the relationship between changed perception of municipal service delivery and people's sense of empowerment.

Has there been a change in people's perception of whether the municipality is able to make a difference?

Where the large majority (70%) had signalled that in their story the municipality was 'slow to take action' in the baseline assessment, in the impact assessment there is a notable shift of clusters towards stories in which the municipality is considered 'trusted to take the right action' and/or 'able to make a difference'. A major increase in the positivity of stories is apparent, though negative stories remain the majority and 'Slow to take action' remains the dominant response (46%).

Below the analysis is broken down by region to further assess the difference in the patterns in people's perception of the municipality.

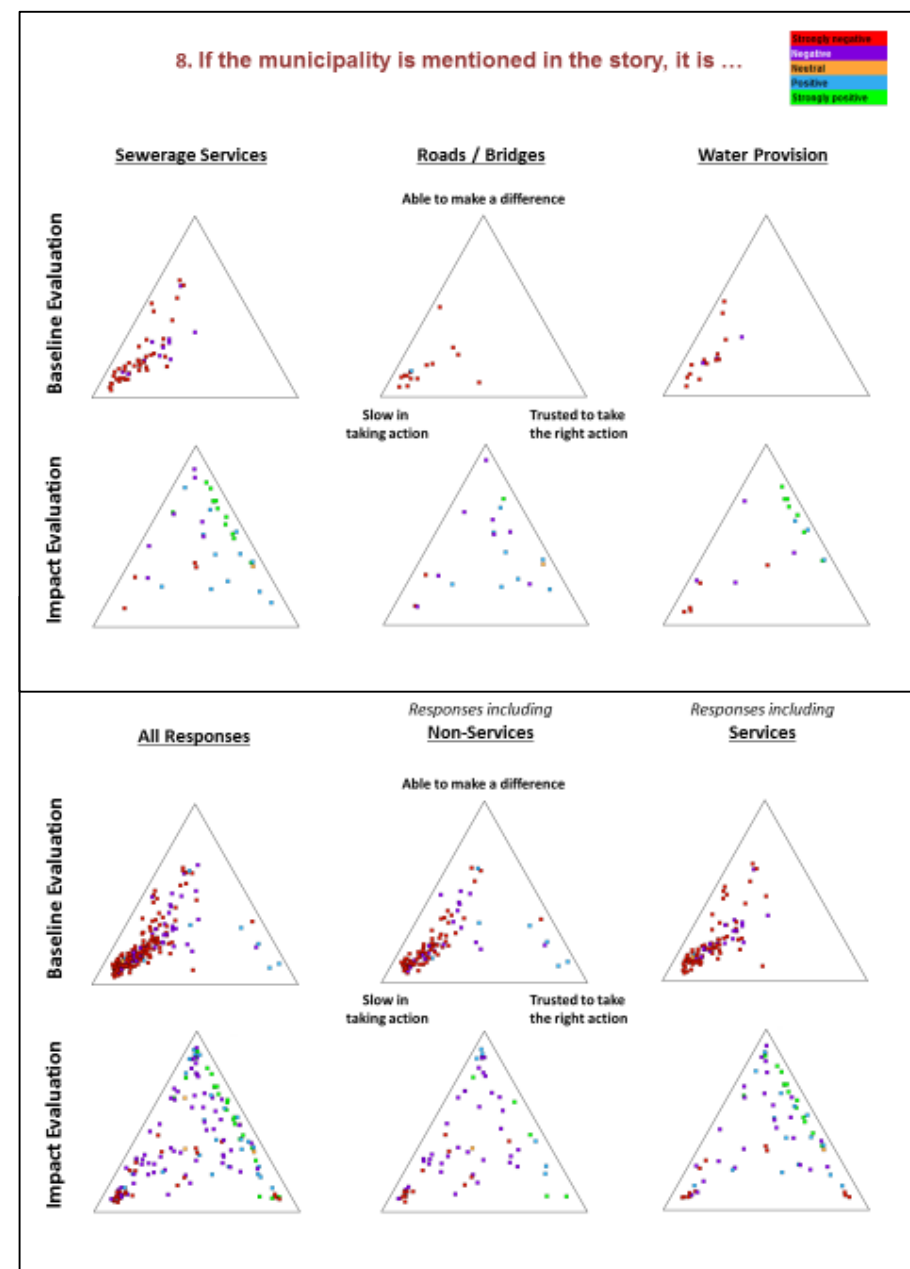
8. If the municipality is mentioned in the story, it is ...



Rajam Issa:

The data shows:

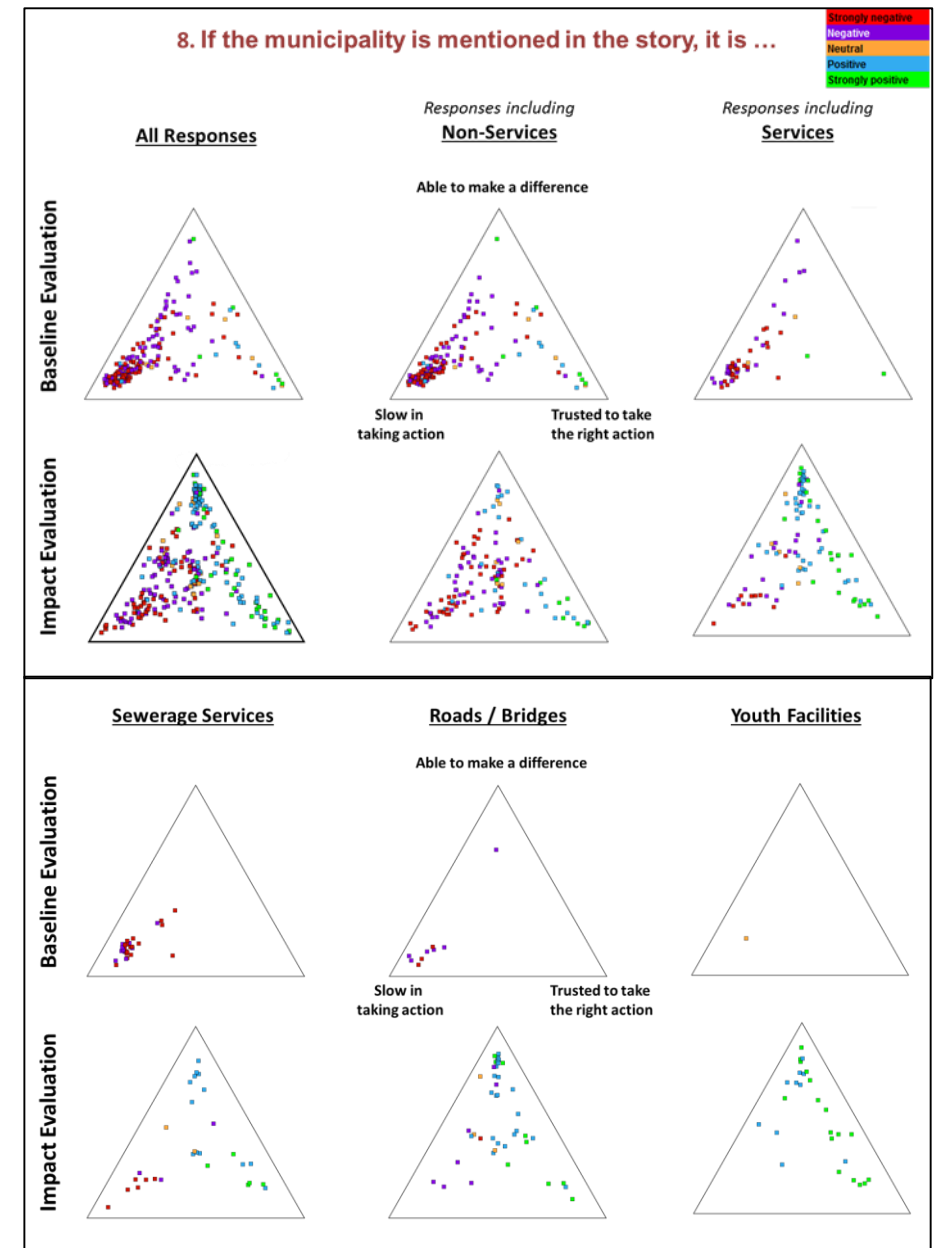
- A significant shift towards stories in which the municipality is considered able to make a difference and/or trusted to take the right action – though the majority of stories remain in the 'slow to take action' category.
- A major shift towards 'able' and 'trusted' in the area of service provision, with a much less marked shift in non-service areas.
- Of service areas analysed, the greatest shift from 'slow' was in sewerage, with some (lesser) improvement in roads/bridges and water supply.



Saadnayel:

The data shows:

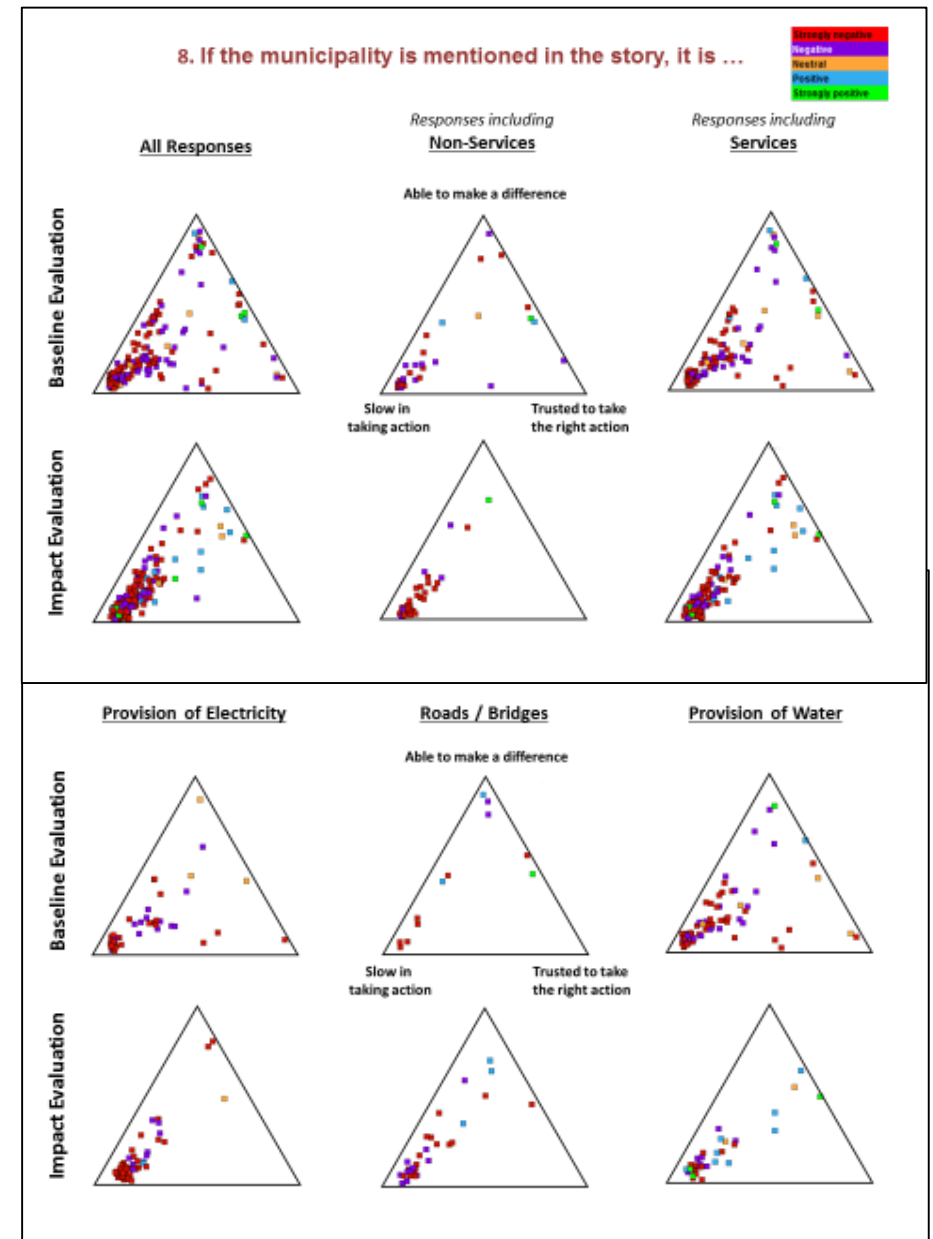
- There is a very significant improvement in perceptions of the ability and trustworthiness of the municipality, and a major increase in the positivity of stories involving municipal government.
- Most of this shift is in service related stories, where perceptions show a remarkable improvement; though there is a lesser but still marked improvement in perceptions of the municipality in non-service related stories too.
- Youth facilities and roads and bridges (the DFID project focus areas) account for most of this change. All youth stories all are highly positive. Very few respondents talking about roads/bridges continued to see the municipality as 'slow to take action'.



Sarafand:

The data shows:

- There is little change between baseline and impact research in the perception of the municipality in Sarafand. The large majority continue to see it as 'slow to take action', and to relate negative stories about it.
- This is true of both service and non-service delivery stories, with little difference between the two types.
- Likewise in the three service areas analysed there is little improvement in the perception of municipal capability or responsiveness. There is a very slight improvement in stories involving water provision, but it is not as marked as in the other locations: water stories are in general more positive, though most respondents still categorise the municipality as 'slow to take action'.

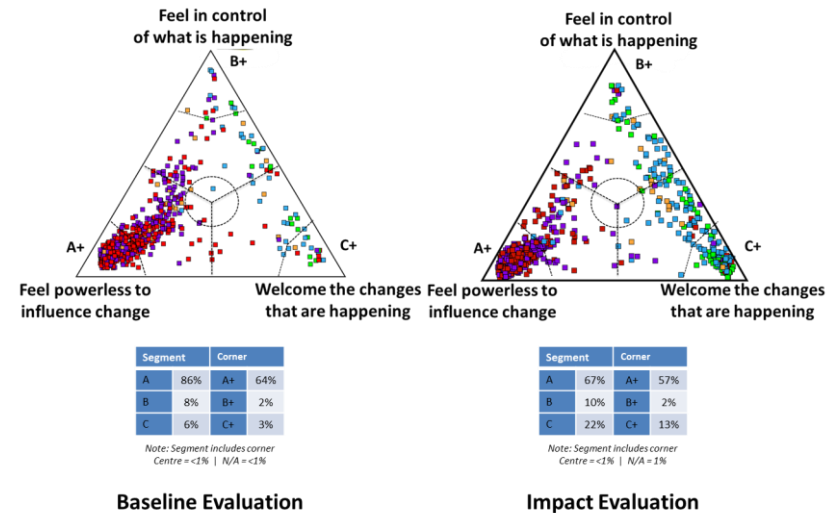


Does the change in perceptions of the municipalities' ability to deliver services contribute to people's sense of empowerment?

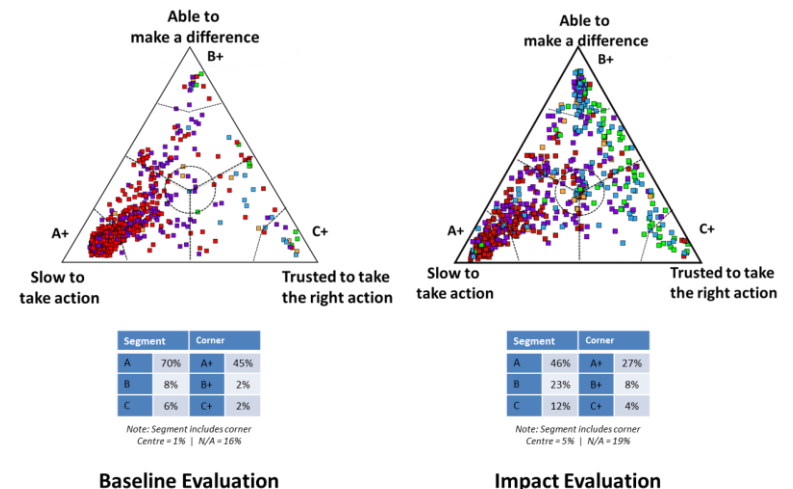
Although there is (as above) a change in people's perception of the ability and trustworthiness of the municipality, this does not correlate with any meaningful change in the number of people who feel empowered. The proportion of respondents who said that the people in their stories felt 'control of what is happening' was only 2% at both baseline and impact evaluation. This suggests that citizens feel that that projects are being 'done to' them, rather than 'done with' them.

There is, however, a correlation between an increased sense of municipal capability and the proportion of respondents who 'welcome the changes that are happening' (6% to 22%). This relates, naturally, to a sense of positivity in respondents' stories. It is logical that respondents who feel positive about their stories also welcome the changes that those stories describe.

3. People in the story ...



8. If the municipality is mentioned in the story, it is ...



What does this mean?

It is clear that perceptions of the municipality have improved after project implementation, both in terms of ability and trustworthiness. This is less the case in Sarafand than in the other two municipalities. This difference may relate, as noted above, to higher initial expectations of state service provision; but may also be affected by awareness of the projects. In the North almost all respondents knew about the project; in the South most did not. It makes sense that people would not credit the municipality with something they do not even know is happening. This reconfirms the importance of visibility, consultation and project communications activity in helping leverage legitimacy benefits.

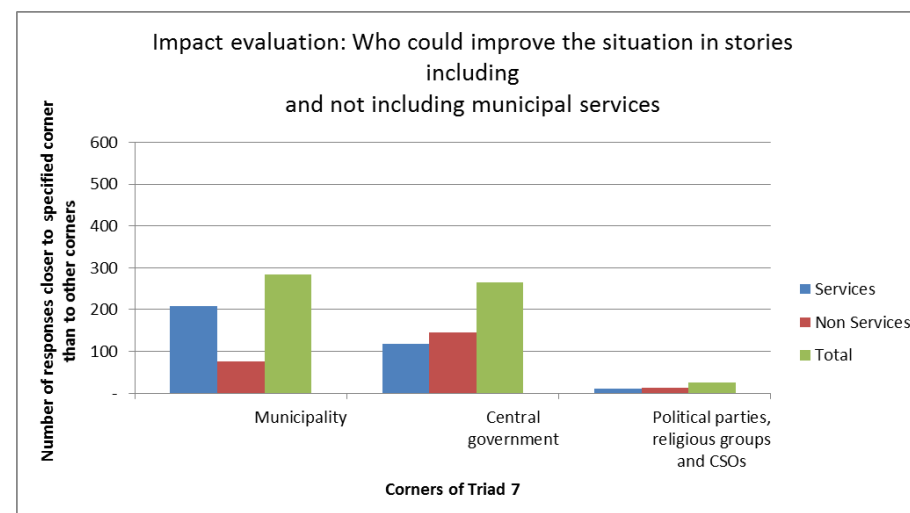
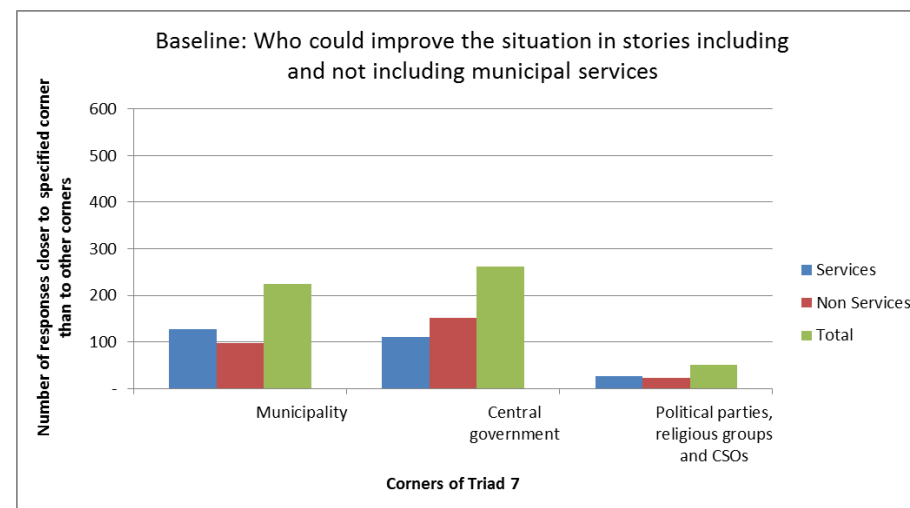
The persistent sense of disempowerment, even among respondents who consider the municipality able to make a difference, suggests that delivery of projects through the municipality is not enough *in itself* to provoke a sense of local level ownership and empowerment. It may be that to generate this sense of empowerment it will be necessary to expand the consultative planning process to incorporate more project beneficiaries to increase the sense of empowerment. Overall, while projects are noticed and welcomed, and do improve perceptions of the municipality, future projects may yield a greater 'legitimacy dividend' through adjustments to the planning and consultation processes, and enhanced project communications.

Have the projects changed people's perception that the municipality *could* improve the situation?

Despite the perception shown in the baseline of the lack of capability of the municipality, there was a sizeable proportion in the baseline who felt that the municipality *could* improve the situation in their story (42%) – the implication being that it chose not to. In the impact evaluation there has been an overall *decrease* in respondents who felt that the municipality could improve their situation to 33%.

Perhaps surprisingly, in all stories only 9% of respondents in the baseline felt that political parties, religious groups and CSOs could improve the situation, and in the impact an even lower proportion of people (5%) who felt that this group of actors could improve the situation.

These findings have been further disaggregated by region and service areas below to assess whether there are significant changes that can be attributed to the different services or regional settings.



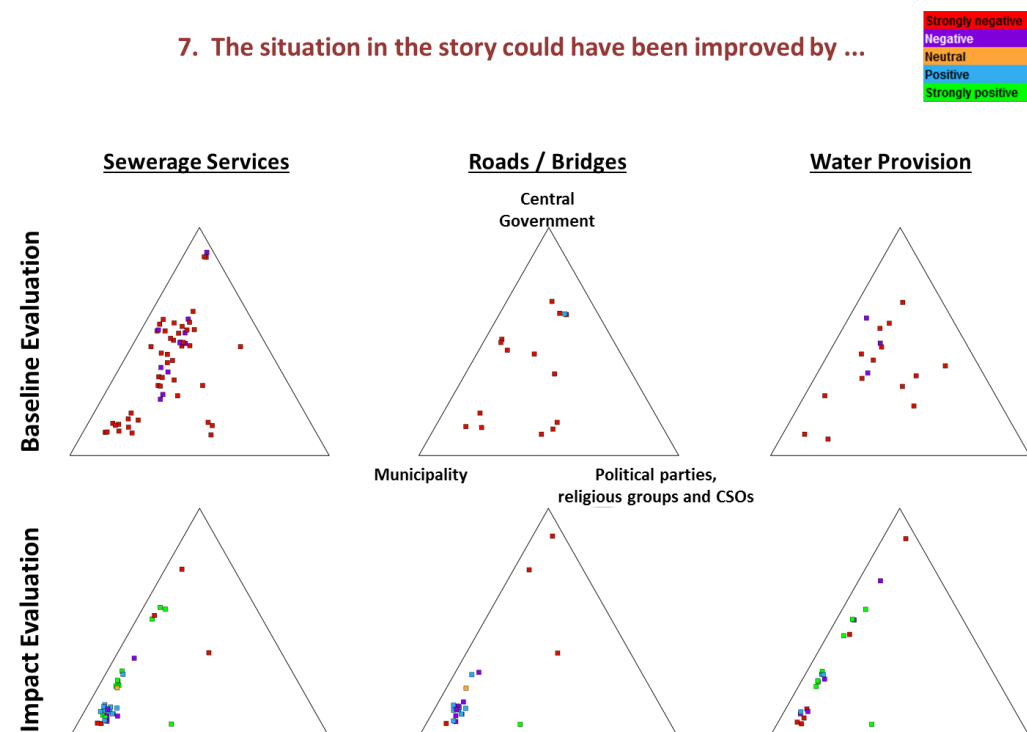
Rajam Issa:

There was a *significant increase* in people who felt that the situation in their story could be improved by the **municipality**, up from 33% to 50%. After the sewerage project was implemented, there was a slight decrease from 26% of respondents who talked about sewerage and felt that the municipality could make a difference to 22%. There has been an *increase* in respondents who signified that their stories could be improved by the municipality in the case of roads and bridges (8% to 14%) and provision of water (5% to 12%).

The proportion of people who felt that **central government** could improve their story decreased from 64% in the baseline to 45% in the impact evaluation. This decrease was particularly marked in the case of sewerage, down from 17% to 4%, whereas people continued to look to the central government for educational services (7%).

There were only 4% of the respondents in the North who felt that **CSOs, political parties or religious groups** could improve their story in both the baseline assessment and impact evaluation. The majority of these stories were about non-service related areas.

7. The situation in the story could have been improved by ...



Saadnayel:

In Saadnayel, there was a *significant increase* in people who mentioned service areas from 37% to 71% and signified that the **municipality** could make a difference. In the project implementation services, there was an increase from 1% to 15% of respondents who talked about youth facilities and an increase from 7% to 20% of respondents who talked about roads and bridges *and* felt that the municipality could improve their story. Sewerage showed virtually no change (from 19% to 17%) between the baseline and the impact assessments.

In the baseline assessment, a majority of the respondents (58%) felt that the **central government** could improve their story. 82% of these respondents referred to non-service delivery areas, in particular jobs and employment (48%) and security (20%). In the impact evaluation there was a *decrease* to 40% who felt that the central government could improve their story and the majority of the stories still included non-service areas (74%). In the service related areas, roads and bridges was the service area where most respondents felt that the central government could improve their story at 11%.

As in the North, there was a very low number of people who believed **CSOs, political parties or religious groups** could improve their story in both the baseline and the impact evaluation (from 6% to 4%).

7. The situation in the story could have been improved by ...



Sarafand:

In Sarafand there was an overall *decrease* of respondents who felt that the **municipality** could improve their story, from 57% to 41%. There was, however, an increase in people who talked about service delivery and felt that the municipality could improve their story, from 76% to 89%. The baseline showed that 13% felt that the municipality could improve the water situation, and this *decreased* to 5% after the project was implemented. There was an *increase* in respondents who talked about roads and bridges and who felt that the municipality could improve their situation (from 6% to 12%).

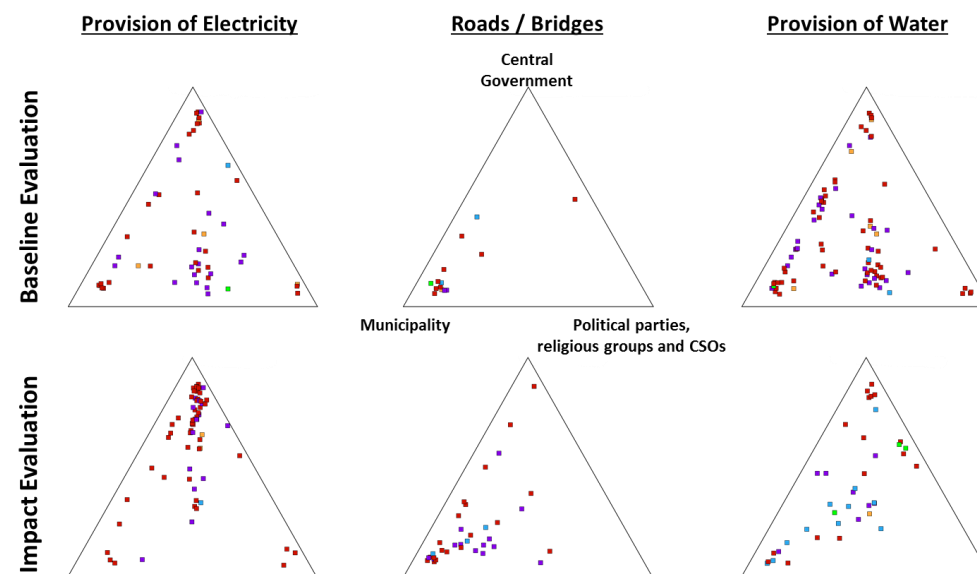
As can be seen in the triads, there has been an increase in people who told stories about electricity and a stronger sense that the **central government** could improve their story (from 29% to 39%). There was a decrease of respondents who mentioned provision of water and signified that central government could improve the situation from 35% to 12%.

Perhaps surprisingly, a low number of people in Sarafand felt that political parties, religious groups or CSOs could make a difference. In the baseline assessment in all stories 18% of respondents signified that **religious groups, political parties and CSOs** could improve their story, and this further *decreased* to 7% in the impact evaluation.

This decrease was particularly marked in service related areas (from 67% to 43%). The service area in which respondents most felt that CSOs could make a difference in the baseline was water at 51%, but after the DFID-funded water project was implemented *no* respondents at all felt that CSOs could improve the water situation. This indicates that respondents no longer looked to this group of

actors to improve the situation but instead looked for this service to the state.

7. The situation in the story could have been improved by ...



What does this mean?

In the cases of sewerage and water, the finding is that people who receive improved services tend to feel less that the municipality *could* make a difference in these service areas. The conclusion is that people report a positive improvement, observe that the municipality has made a difference, and therefore do not signal that it *could* make a difference because it already *has* made a difference. At the same time, the receipt better services in some focus project areas tends to increase the assumption that the municipality could make difference in others – the conclusion being that the municipality has begun to prove its capability in some areas, and that it is therefore looked for assistance in others.

The findings from the data are rather different in the areas of roads and bridges, and in youth facilities, where improved service provision by the municipality does increase the sense among citizens that the municipality could make a difference in those service areas. It is difficult to explain the difference in response to projects in water/sewerage and roads/bridges/youth services, which is a consistent theme across a number of triads. It is possible that the 'external' nature of the latter services (i.e. the fact that they are manifested in public spaces and not received by citizens in their homes) means that improvements are observed as qualitatively different from 'internal' services (i.e. those received in homes). This is explored further in the conclusions section.

As per the baseline report, citizens tend to continue to look to central government for certain services, notably education and electricity. However, there is a decline overall in the extent to which citizens look to central government as they observe the receipt of services through the municipality. In areas where the municipality has been under-resourced and has provided very little (e.g. the North) the impact of service delivery through the municipality is greatest, probably because people's expectations are very low. It will be important to observe how this increased expectation of municipal service provision as a result of projects implementation affects levels of satisfaction with state service provision in the future.

The low incidence of people considering that political parties, religious groups and CSOs could make a difference is surprising, particularly in the South where political parties play a dominant role in governance and service provision. In discussions in Sarafand some workshop participants talked about the role of the political parties (i.e. Amal) and of the state, and indicated that there may be a tendency to conflate the two – because the 'government' is the entity which governs, which in the case of the South is in part a party political role, with the Council of the South a representation of political parties as a component of government: a state political entity.

4 Conclusions

- The DFID-funded projects have had an impact. They have increased the positivity of citizens in regard to the focus services, reduced the sense of conflict/competition, increased the sense of cooperation, and enhanced perceptions of the capability and trustworthiness of the municipality.
- This impact varies by project and location, with better results observed in the North and Bekaa than in the South. There may be many reasons for this, including differences in expectations of state service provision between locations, as well as specific sociological, political and demographic factors.
- There are major socio-political difference between the geographical areas, and different projects have different effects in different locations. A localised approach, with a higher degree of control over project selection, planning and measurement at local level, is likely to deliver greater effect.
- The projects have had a positive effect on perceptions of the municipal government. However, delivery through the municipality has not proved sufficient *in itself* to give people a sense that they are in control of what is happening. It is worth considering widening the consultation to include a larger number of citizens in the area, since the consultative planning process does not seem to have generated a sense of empowerment among respondents.
- Awareness is key – there is a direct correlation between high awareness of projects and data which indicates enhanced social cohesion and municipal legitimacy. Investment in awareness raising, project communications and other ‘soft’ programme activities is likely to leverage considerably greater stabilisation benefit from the ‘hard’ investment in services.
- People talk less about services that improve (i.e. they complain more about problems than they discuss the solutions). When they do talk about improvements, they do not tend to relate them to refugees. In other words, they tend to relate their *problems* to refugees more than the *solutions* to those problems.
- Relieving resource pressures reduces the tendency to ‘blame’ the refugees; but this may displace refugee complaints onto the next-most-pressing problem. Satisfaction with service does not per se equal enhanced social cohesion.
- There are key differences between the way people perceive improvements in water and sewerage services and the way they perceive improvements in roads, bridges and youth facilities. In this report we have hypothesised that these differences relate to the notion that water and sewerage improvements aim to reduce the “shortage of a shortage” of a service, where roads, bridges and youth facilities are perceived more as a positive “extra” benefit. We have also hypothesised that services delivered ‘externally’ (in the public space) are perceived differently from those delivered ‘internally’ (into the home). Additional monitoring over time is needed to test these hypotheses; but there may be important considerations for

programming, including on decisions regarding how to generate the most 'bang for the buck' in terms of social cohesion benefit.

- Project implementation appears to have an impact on perceptions not only in the project focus area (i.e. in stories about that service) but more widely. We have hypothesised that there may be a 'contagion effect', in which small projects can precipitate a wider increase in positivity. It is not necessarily the case that spending more generates the greatest social cohesion dividend. Fixing two bridges (\$55k) generated similar shifts in perception to the installation of a sewerage system (279\$k). Bigger is not necessarily better.
- Delivery of one service by the municipality tends to improve perceptions of the municipality in other thematic areas; but also raises expectations that the municipality *could* deliver wider improvements. It will be useful to monitor the effect of project implementation over time to assess whether increased expectations of state service provision lead, over time, to a decrease in satisfaction with the state.
- Receipt of improved services tends to reduce people's tendency to 'take direct action'. This may be a positive indication of a reduction in conflict; but it may also signal a reduced reliance on coping strategies. Further research could seek to identify the existence, use and value of different coping strategies, the impact these strategies have on resilience, and the effect of improved state service provision on coping as a response.
- The quantity of projects being delivered across Lebanon's municipalities is vast, as is the number of donors and implementing partners. Agreement on the outcome and impact level objectives of this programming in terms of social cohesion and stability, and greater integration of project data, is likely to help maximise the results of DFID and other donor investment.

Annex A: Key findings from the regional workshops

We here set out a summary of the key themes from the regional workshops.

Expectations of the State

It was apparent from discussion at the three regional workshops that expectations of the state and state service provision vary considerably between the three locations. Rajam Issa is located in a part of Lebanon which was only 'nationalised' in 1994-96, and the system of municipalities in that area has itself existed only since 2012. Political structures are embryonic, and the highly networked society demonstrates many of the characteristics of a tribal one, with major families operating business networks but also occupying positions of formal authority (including in the municipal government).

Several participants commented on the 'independence' of people in the area, who have the expectation that they will meet their priority needs from their own resources, and through trading (including across the border). By contrast, Sarafand has a much more developed history of service provision by the state and by other actors (see below), and participants commented that people have an *expectation* of service provision in a way which they do not in the North.

This may go some way to explaining why the results in the North display a greater shift in opinion compared with those in the South (with the Bekaa results somewhere in between) – because provision of *anything* to citizens by the state in the North is unusual, unexpected and highly appreciated, where in the South it is seen more as 'business as usual'.

It is common in evaluation of public perception, for example of policing services, for satisfaction to decline as service provision increases – because of raised expectations. Interest was expressed in observing whether this shift to an expectation of service delivery occurs in the North as more and more services are provided, and if so what effect it has on people's perceptions of what they 'should' receive, and what it means to them when they receive it.

Socio-political variation

Related to the above point are variations in the socio-political make-up of the three regions. There was an expectation that in Sarafand the research would indicate that people look to political and religious parties to 'make a difference' (Triad 4) – in fact the large majority look to the state (central or local). However, in discussions participants in Sarafand talked about the role of the political parties (i.e. Amal) and of the state, and indicated that there may be a tendency to conflate the two – because the 'government' is the entity which governs, which in the case of the South is in part a party political role, with the Council of the South a representation of political parties as a component of government: a state political entity.

By contrast in discussions in Rajam Issa the role of political parties was considered less relevant. What was also clear was that citizens look to local and national government for different *types* of services – for example education and electricity are considered national-level responsibilities, while water and roads tend to be viewed locally. This may be significant from the perspective of selecting projects likely to generate the greatest effect in terms of local government legitimacy.

Seasonal variation

Participants in all three regions pointed out that seasonal changes have the potential to skew the results. In particular, it was posited that the water project in Sarafand was addressing a problem which was far more pressing in September than in February, because of winter rainfall. Participants recommended that seasonal factors be taken into account when planning future research.

Awareness and empowerment

Municipal interlocutors in all three areas were keen to point out the importance of awareness, public communications and public education to disseminate information about the projects, reinforce the benefits, ensure that ‘the credit’ is attributed to the municipality, and to promote a sense of ownership and empowerment. Less marked shifts in perceptions in Sarafand, and a lower impact on perceptions of municipal responsiveness, were attributed in part to the fact that many citizens *did not know* about the project, or if they did they were not informed on who was providing it (since they receive a wide range of projects from a wide range of interlocutors). It was generally felt that a stronger communications function at municipal level would yield considerable benefits in terms of public perceptions.

This comment from Sarafand is borne out by the data. The proportion of respondents who knew about water projects increased from 9% to 19% between baseline and impact evaluation. In Rajam Issa, however, the proportion of those who reported that they knew about sanitation projects increased from 2% to 98% (i.e. almost everyone had noticed the project). In Saadnayel there were also marked (though lesser increases in knowledge of the focus projects, from 2% to 37%. It is reasonable to conclude that the Sarafand project was either less well publicised, or was to an extent lost in ‘the noise’ of a large amount of project activity. This implies (a) that selection of projects designed for stability effect should take into account the wider project and aid context; and (b) that awareness raising and communications activities are potentially important multipliers, which for relatively little investment can leverage considerable increases in impact.

The communications issues were thought to relate to matters of ‘empowerment’. Although the projects are in general noted and lead to reduced indications of tensions and enhanced perceptions of municipal responsiveness, the data indicates no significant impact on whether they feel that their voice matters. Some participants made the point that communications was an important *two-way* function, not only telling people what was going on but taking their views into account to promote a sense of empowerment which is currently lacking.

Monitoring the wider effects

Concerns were expressed regarding the limitations of the research, in the sense of it focusing exclusively on the municipalities in which the focus projects were taking place. Several participants pointed out the need to monitor effect at an area level, since it was likely that the provision of services in one municipality but not in neighbouring municipalities could have a negative impact on public perceptions in those neighbouring locations, and particularly of the ability of the municipal government to secure access to state or international resources. The municipalities should not, in other words, be viewed in isolation, but as part of a network with numerous inter-connections and where changes in one location have impact on attitudes and perceptions elsewhere.

In a related point, participants observed that although the greatest shift in perceptions occurred in the focus project services (e.g. water, roads), similar (though lesser) changes were also observed in other thematic areas not receiving any project support (i.e. sewerage in Saadnayel), as well as in non-service delivery areas. In other words, the project effect on perceptions mirrored a wider shift. Participants felt it important to investigate this observation to establish whether shifts in perceptions in the focus project service were in part attributable to wider shifts in perceptions triggered by other (non-project) stimuli; or if (as was speculated) improvements in the project focus area triggered a wider shift in attitudinal change which 'infects' perceptions in other service and non-service delivery areas. The point here was to investigate whether small and low cost projects could be leveraged to achieve wider effects in terms of a broader shift of perceptions regarding community relations and the legitimacy of the municipality.

The municipality as a delivery mechanism

There was a strong opinion among many participants, particularly in the North and the Bekaa, that the municipal government was the best medium for the delivery of assistance to the community. Many of those represented were municipal officials, so there is likely to be a bias in that direction; but it was widely felt that the municipality had a better and more direct understanding of citizens' priority concerns, needs and demands than NGOs, most of which were not represented at local level.

The value and importance of impact assessment

It was clear from discussions that participants in all three workshops were very familiar with output level assessment, but less so with outcome or impact level assessment focused on evaluating public benefit. A few participants voiced some scepticism (e.g. in Sarafand) that this was a useful way of analysing benefit, since so many factors impact on public perceptions. Overall, however the response to the research and analysis was overwhelmingly positive. For example:

- Mayors in the north commented that this was the first time that they had seen evidence of results which they knew existed (through observation, conversation and anecdote) but had never had tools to measure;

- Participants in Bekaa were similarly happy to see that they had achieved results, but focused also on the 'stickers' – those clusters of opinion apparently resistant to change, or which had not been affected by project implementation;
- Mayors were enthusiastic about using research of this type as part of a wider planning-assessment-analysis-planning cycle.

Overall, participants were keen that this research continue, but were also clear that they would like to exercise greater ownership of it, to be able to use it more proactively in planning.