

Responding to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon

Collaboration between aid agencies and local governance structures

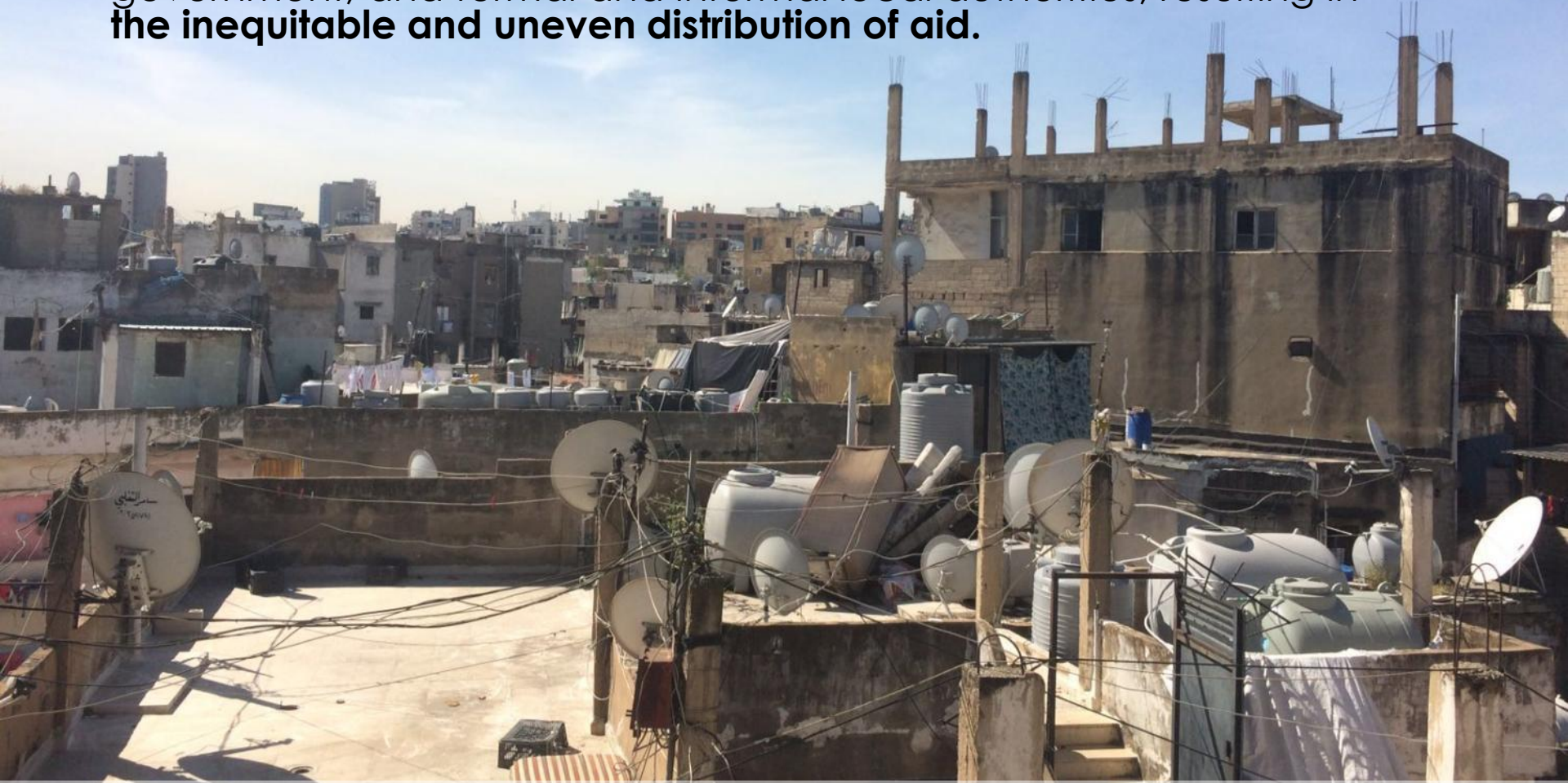
October 14, 2016



The Problem

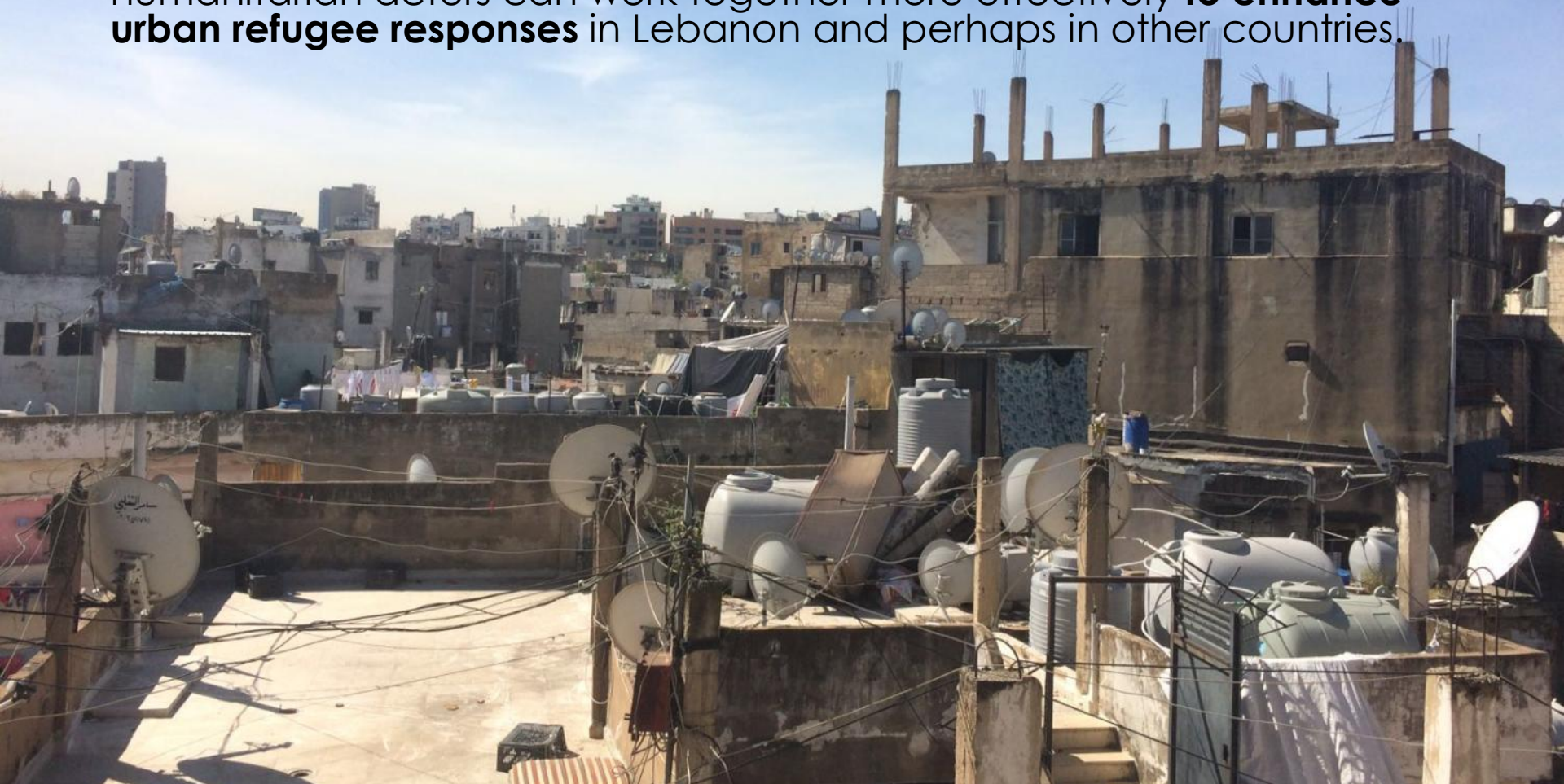
The lack of a solid national strategy and the very limited capacity of local government to cope with a large-scale crisis.

Weak coordination between international actors, the central government, and formal and informal local authorities, resulting in **the inequitable and uneven distribution of aid.**



Research Objective

This research **analyses existing collaboration mechanisms** in relation to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon and provides a series of recommendations, on how national, local and international humanitarian actors can work together more effectively **to enhance urban refugee responses** in Lebanon and perhaps in other countries.



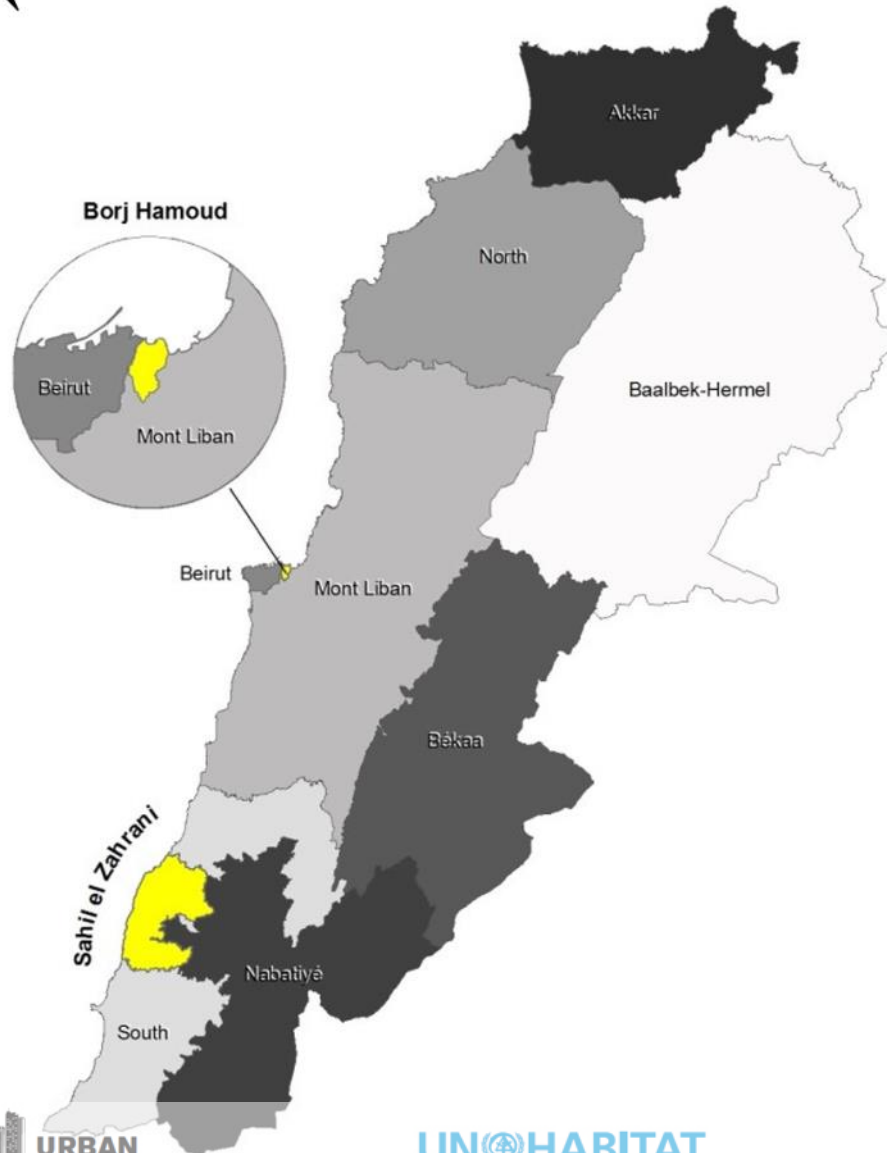
Our Argument

Humanitarians will only be able to ensure their responses are sustainable and meet needs on the ground if they work closely with local authorities.



TWO CASE STUDIES

BOURJ HAMMOUD AND SAHEL EI-ZAHRANI

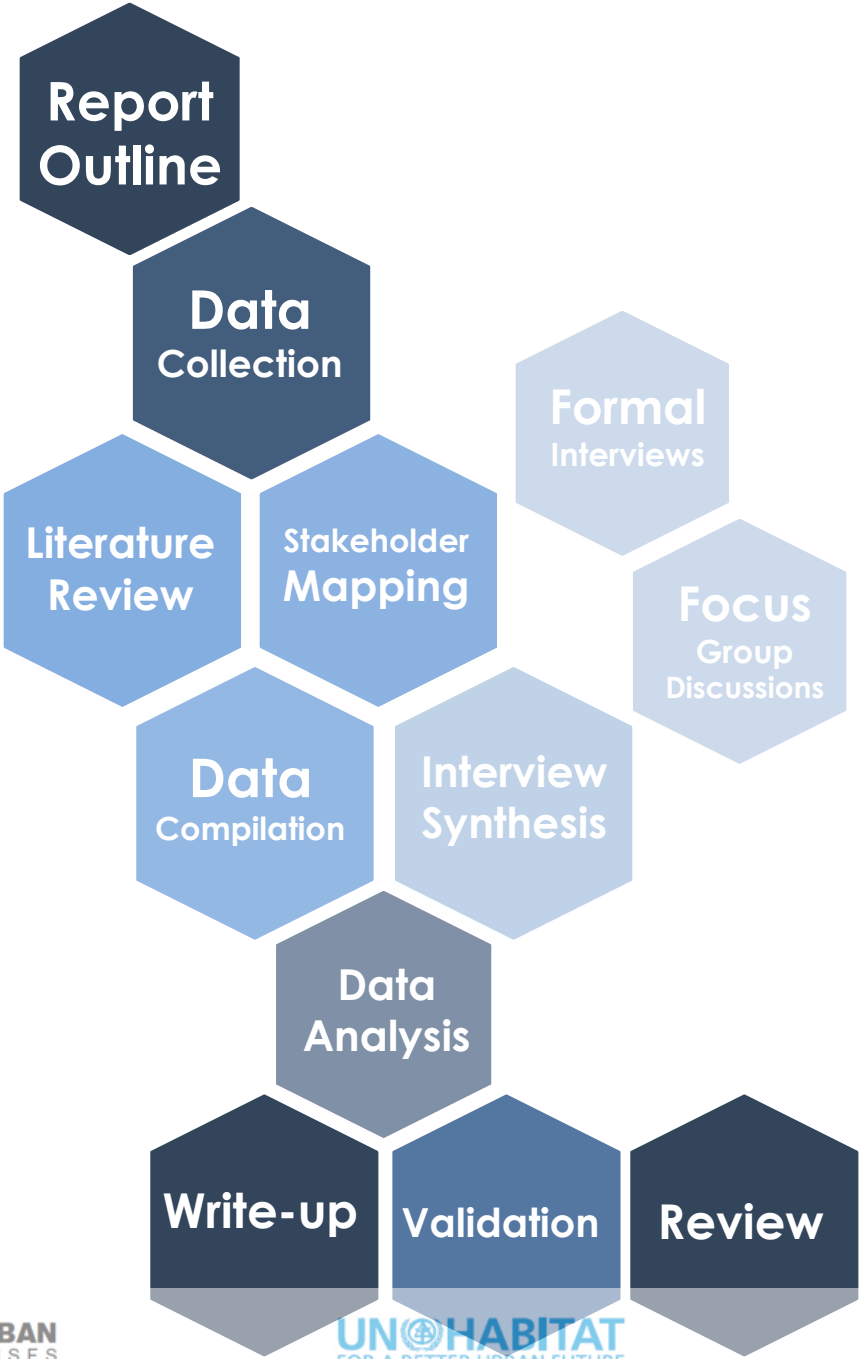


URBAN
CRISIS

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Issam Fares Institute for Public
Policy and International Affairs
معهد عصام فارس للسياسات
العامة والشؤون الدولية



Four focus group discussions

Nabaa - Bourj Hammoud

- Lebanese host group
- Syrian Refugees

Sahel El-Zahrani

- Lebanese host group
- Syrian Refugees



REPORT STRUCTURE

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Chapter 2:

The Lebanese context and response to the Syrian crisis

Chapter 3:

The Refugee Crisis in Lebanon: Coordination between local and international actors

Chapter 4:

Refugees in Sahel el Zahrani

Chapter 5:

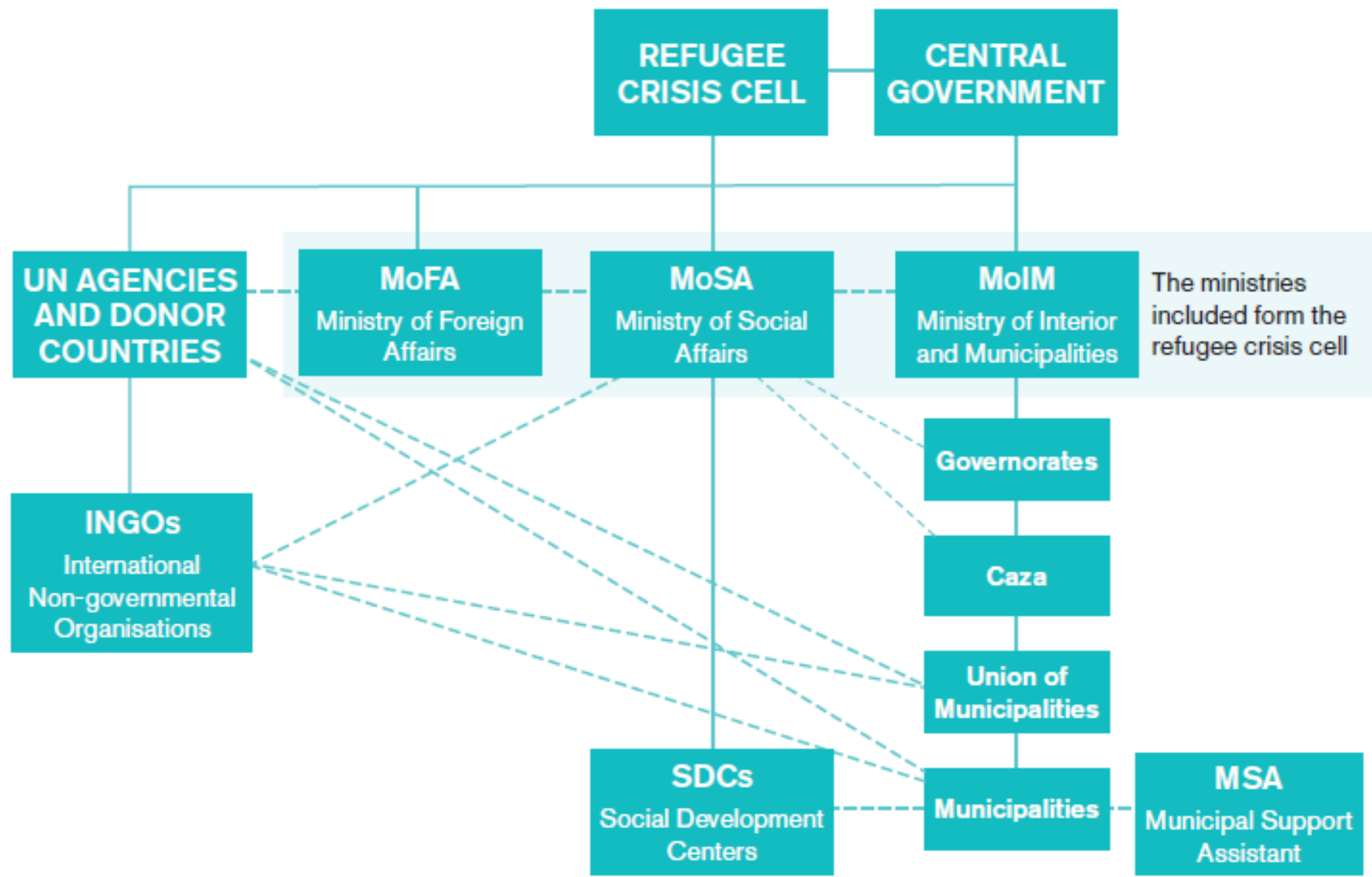
Refugees in Bourj Hammoud

Chapter 6:

Conclusion: Challenges and Lessons



- Administrative decentralization on the level of Qada'a and municipality
- MoM: supervising authority for municipalities
- 750 municipalities in 53 municipal unions
- Challenges of UoM (Unions of Municipalities):
 - Weak administrative capabilities
 - High dependence on independent municipal revenues
 - Submission of municipal councils to central authority
 - More pressure on municipalities in terms of responsibilities, yet same municipal budget

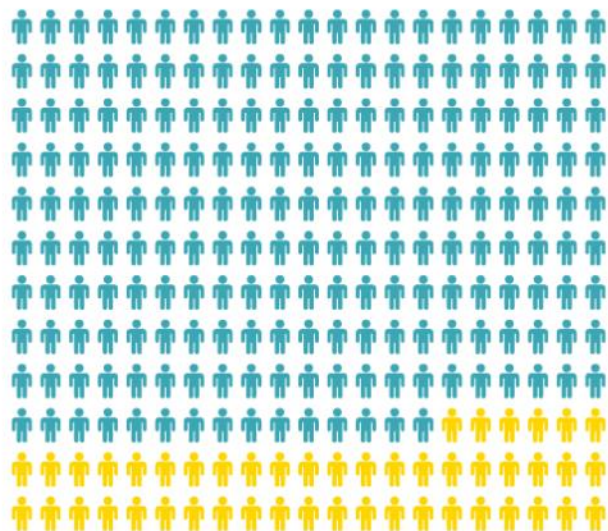




Adloun village - Sahel El-Zahrani



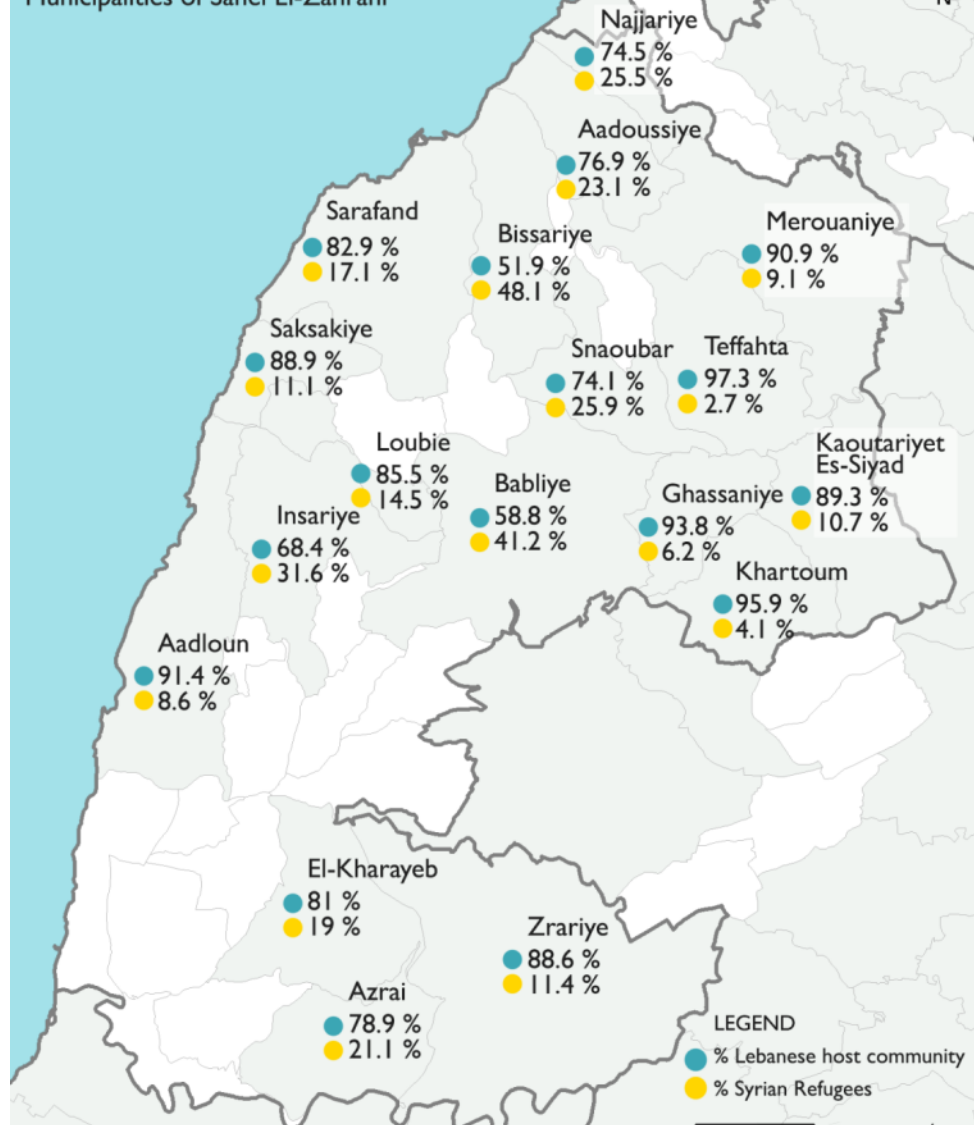
Number of Syrian Refugees in Sahel El-Zahrani Compared to the Number of Local Residents



● Number of Lebanese Residents **81%** ● Number of Syrian Refugees **19%**

“...Some municipalities have welcomed Syrian Refugees regardless of their low capacities to provide basic services. For example, the town of Bissariye welcomed a high number of refugees (6,500 people) compared to the number of its local inhabitants (7,000 people).”

Percentage of Lebanese Host Community vs. Percentage of Syrian Refugees Registered in Municipalities of Sahel El-Zahrani



LEGEND
● % Lebanese host community
● % Syrian Refugees

CASE STUDIES:

The Case of The Municipality of Bourj Hammoud

- Hosts more than 20,000 Syrians
- Characterized with chronic vulnerability
- Issues started being addressed by international programmes after the war in Syria.
- The Bourj Hammoud municipality is part of a coordination committee made of 20 members including the municipality of Sin el-Fil and local NGOs.



Challenges

-  1. **The lack of response from the Lebanese government** during the first years of the crisis, the outsourcing of service provision to international organisations, and leaving local authorities to coordinate their interventions on the ground, have proved to be problematic.
-  2. **The informal mandate of UNHCR and other relief agencies in Lebanon** has unintentionally affected coordination, particularly in the distribution of roles and tasks among INGOs and local NGOs as well as between INGOs and local authorities.
-  3. **The heavy bureaucracy of the Lebanese central government** creates severe hurdles for local authorities to play an active role in relief.
-  4. While several humanitarian and development agencies aim to strengthen municipalities and UoMs across Lebanon, **decentralisation**, seen as necessary within a wavering state, **does not necessarily lead to optimal logistic and financial results.**
-  5. (Mis)coordination between local authorities and humanitarian agencies is largely explained by the **intersection of global politics of intervention and domestic politics.**
-  6. **Donorship influences short-term and long-term approaches to development and assistance**, in accordance with the cornerstone of humanitarian action of most international donors and NGOs.
-  7. **Service allocation according to national and stigmatised criteria** such as ‘refugees’ and ‘host communities’ exacerbates personal identifications along the lines of ‘criteria of access’ to humanitarian assistance regimes.
-  8. **The lack of a shared vision between local/ international organisations and local authorities** creates a barrier to coordinating a sustainable response and development programme.
-  9. **INGOs tendencies to implementing their own programmes independently of local advice** in compliance with their donors’ agenda or because the area of intervention is easier to approach and address.

Lebanon's central government should **lead** coordination of emergency responses at the national level and **support** the involvement of municipalities in local and regional coordination frameworks.



Humanitarian actors should make a far greater effort to **coordinate with local authorities**, including municipalities and Unions of Municipalities, at the onset of crises and as emergencies unfold over the longer-term.



Policy Pointers

The central government and humanitarian agencies should **promote medium- and long-term programmes** through the **LCRP** to ensure greater coordination.



Humanitarian and aid organisations can better facilitate coordination across affected sectors within a defined geography by **adopting area-based, spatial approaches**, especially when addressing protracted crises in urban contexts.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

-  1. **A more effective role for central government.** The central government should enhance coordination with and support to local municipalities in times of crisis, as well as in the aftermath.
-  2. **A focus shift from emergency relief to medium- and long-term programmes.**
-  3. **Enhance coordination at the local level.** Local authorities must be involved in coordination frameworks and their representatives should attend high-level meetings between humanitarian agencies.
-  4. **Listen to the most affected.** Innovative coordination mechanisms that take into account the views of both refugees and host communities should be established to ensure programmes efficiently address their respective needs.
-  5. **Build on sectoral approaches with spatial approaches.** Sectoral responses to refugee crises should be complemented with area-based approaches.
-  6. **Strengthen regional coordination.** Since the majority of municipalities in Lebanon are fairly small, INGOs and UN agencies should strengthen coordination with Unions of Municipalities.
-  7. **Respond to urban challenges.** It is important to raise awareness and develop the necessary tools and coordination mechanisms to optimally address the needs of refugees in urban contexts, especially since more refugees are settling in urban areas worldwide.
-  8. **Knowledge sharing should be horizontal.** Knowledge should be shared horizontally rather than solely through a hierarchical relationship in which international agencies enjoy a monopoly on administrative authority and technical knowhow.

For more info, kindly check the policy brief and complete document in the links below:

Complete document

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10799IIED.pdf>

Policy Brief

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17373IIED.pdf>