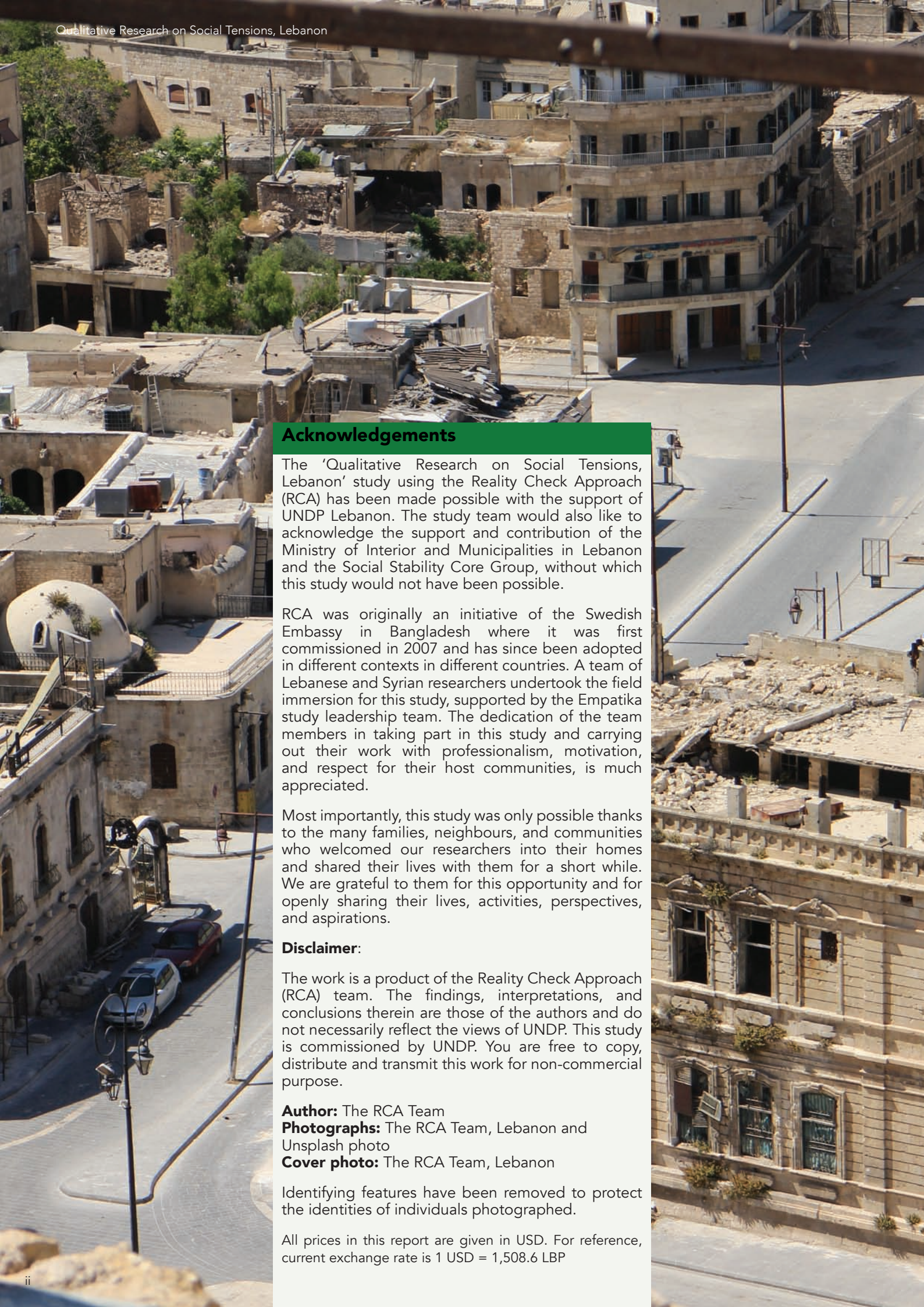




**Qualitative Research on
Social Tensions, Lebanon**
Round 1, Year 1

Submitted July 2019



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RCA was originally an initiative of the Swedish Embassy in Bangladesh where it was first commissioned in 2007 and has since been adopted in different contexts in different countries. A team of Lebanese and Syrian researchers undertook the field immersion for this study, supported by the Empatika study leadership team. The dedication of the team members in taking part in this study and carrying out their work with professionalism, motivation, and respect for their host communities, is much appreciated.

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Disclaimer:

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Identifying features have been removed to protect the identities of individuals photographed.

All prices in this report are given in USD. For reference, current exchange rate is 1 USD = 1,508.6 LBP

Glossary

ARK Group DMCC	A development consultancy responsible for carrying out routine perception surveys of Syrians and Lebanese related to social tensions
IS	Informal settlements
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
LBP	Lebanese pounds (currency)
mukhtar	Influential individual who undertakes official and unofficial duties in a given locality
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OAG	Opposition Armed Groups
OT Syrians	Old time Syrians, ie Syrians who have been living in Lebanon for more than a decade
Pro-GoS	Pro-Government of Syria
PUBG	Player's Unknown Battleground, online multi-player video game
RCA	Reality Check Approach (immersion research)
RPS	'Routine Perception Surveys' of Lebanese and Syrians related to social tensions
Shawish	Local leader or respected individual, including those who often have the role of supervising refugee settlements
umum	Arabic term people use to refer to the UN or organisations they perceive to be part of the UN
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
US\$	United States dollar (currency)

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Executive Summary

Introduction

A 'tensions monitoring system' has been established by UNDP, UNHCR and other partners to analyse and provide feedback on intercommunity relations to various stakeholders. A key element of the monitoring system is the ARK Group DMCC-implemented regular perception surveys (RPS) on social tensions throughout Lebanon which have been conducted in five waves.¹ These studies survey 5,000 people across 26 districts and provide data on perceptions of social stability and tensions between host communities and Syrians. To complement RPS and deepen the tensions monitoring system UNDP commissioned this longitudinal qualitative immersion research specifically to gather rich insights from Syrians and Lebanese host communities. This report presents the main findings of the first round (February-March, 2019) from four Governorates.

This immersion research adopted the Reality Check Approach² whereby researchers live with

families and participate in their everyday lives for several days and nights. It relies on many, iterative and informal conversations with families, their neighbours and people they interact with during the course of their everyday lives augmented by direct observation and experience. Within each of the eight Governorates, one location has been selected based on key determinants developed collaboratively with stakeholders. In this first round, locations were in: Bekaa Valley IS (a study location with high concentration of Syrian refugees), North Lebanon (a study location which is prosperous Maronite Christian, no IS and mostly pre-crisis Syrian workers), South Akkar IS (a study location which is both poor and has a high concentration of Syrian refugees), and Mt. Lebanon coastal village (a study location mostly populated by Lebanese Christians with no IS).

Researchers lived with sixteen families (3 Syrian and 1 Lebanese in each location³) and had conversations with over 700 people including neighbours, local business owners, street vendors, service providers, shop owners and landlords

¹ These waves were implemented in I) May 2017, II) September 2017, III) January 2018, IV) June 2018 and V) March 2019

² For reference, see: <http://www.reality-check-approach.com>

³ In future rounds we will increase the number of Lebanese households but in this first round faced difficulties encouraging enough Lebanese researchers to participate.

during this first study round. Of the Syrian families lived with five lived in IS and 7 in rented accommodation.

Self-defined segmentation

People themselves identified different categories of both Syrians and Lebanese to which different attitudes and behaviours were attributed. Syrians were categorised as (i) refugees, (ii) seasonal workers and (ii) long term inhabitants (LTI). **The largest Syrian sub-group, Syrian refugees (i), arrived since 2011, are mostly Sunni, live in IS or low rent accommodation, mostly without, what people referred to as, 'UN files' (UN registration) or residency and are reliant on casual work, aid and loans. All we met had felt forced to leave Syria for their safety and all regarded their stay in Lebanon as temporary.**

The next largest group were Syrian seasonal workers (ii) who have been coming to Lebanon long before the crisis, work mostly in agriculture (some in construction and tourism) and live in accommodation provided by the landowner/business owner. Families have joined them since the crisis. Like Syrian refugees, **these families intend mostly to return when safe to do so.**

LTI Syrians (iii) were most common in North Christian town, mostly have legal residency and sponsors, secure work with reasonable incomes and have lived in Lebanon many years. Most regard Lebanon as their home and work hard at integration including adopting local dialects. Recently, some of their extended families have joined them.

Lebanese people across all study locations commonly portrayed LTI Syrians as contributing to the Lebanese economy, and more recent Syrian arrivals (refugees and the families of seasonal workers) as extracting benefits, jobs or aid.

People also noted confessional distinctions; Syrians in South Akkar IS are the most conservative Sunni Muslims observing purdah, prayer times and preferring that women do not work; observance in Bekaa Valley IS was less strict with no purdah and only observance of Friday prayers; Sunni Syrians living in the two Christian communities in North Christian town and Mt. Lebanon coastal village were the most liberal and men and women interacted freely. **Lebanese Sunnis noted their**

'common Muslim identity' with Syrian Sunnis unites them and is more important than nationality.

Lebanese were categorized as (i) large land owners (ii) small business owners (iii) struggling self-employed small businessmen (iv) small-scale farmers and (v) poor labourers. Large landowners (i) were in all study locations except South Akkar IS, employed Syrian workers, were described as 'wealthy' and often did not reside near their landholdings. Small business owners (ii) were primarily in North Christian town Christian town and Mt. Lebanon coastal village, Christian and often employed Lebanese and sponsored LTI Syrians as well as Syrian refugees in menial work. **Struggling Lebanese (iii) were primarily self-employed tradespeople who have suffered considerably from the recent economic turndown and feel the incursion of Syrians in these sectors more acutely than all other Lebanese we met.** (iv) Small scale farmers were mostly in South Akkar IS (very few in Bekaa Valley IS) and cultivated cash crops, sometimes employing day labour. Poor labourers (v) worked in agriculture and construction mostly as casual workers but distanced themselves from menial work undertaken by Syrians.

Social interaction

In all study locations, **Syrian new arrivals (refugees and families of seasonal workers) lived separately from Lebanese.** IS dwellers chose to be separate and close to their own families and with a desire to 'keep out of trouble' kept interactions with Lebanese to a minimum of employment and market. As work is largely segregated it does not support social interaction. The two shift system at schools means that Syrian and Lebanese children do not mix at school or recreationally. There are few public spaces in any of the study locations and Syrian families prefer not to use them. In South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS, Lebanese and Syrian men have minimal interaction at mosques. The most social interaction observed between Syrians and Lebanese was in Mt. Lebanon coastal village and between LTI Syrians and Lebanese in North Christian town. Although that was constrained by a strong sense of cultural difference, for example related to foods commonly eaten in Muslim and Christian homes. **In no study locations were there any activities or programmes designed to improve interaction between Syrians and Lebanese.**

Work and economy

Lebanese families commonly noted Lebanon's economic and job situation as a source of stress and attributed it to recent Syrian arrivals. However, our experience indicates that **actual competition for work is limited and only seems to threaten self-employed Lebanese (iii) who are also the most vulnerable to downturns in the economy.** Jobs for Syrians and Lebanese have traditionally been segregated and this largely remains the case as a typical quote explains *'most Lebanese don't know how to work in agriculture or construction, so we need Syrians to come here to do this work.'* **Syrians continue to occupy manual and menial work which Lebanese do not want because it is low paid and low status.** Many Syrian refugee families depend on a single income earner (man or woman), who is well networked and supports the entire family, reducing the risk for others who are undocumented. In South Akkar IS where wages are particularly low, both Syrian refugee men and women worked long hours in order to *'survive'*. In Mt. Lebanon, Lebanese complained that members of families who had joined seasonal Syrian workers (ii) take jobs in hospitality sectors but in fact many young Lebanese had alternative work in Beirut and there was a shortage of labour. Lebanese commonly complained that Syrians' willingness to accept lower wages forced them out of work, especially in shops and restaurants. **Lebanese rarely spoke of any economic benefit of the Syrian presence in their communities.**

There is a pervasive lack of legal protection for low paid work whether undertaken by Syrians or Lebanese. Syrian workers felt particularly vulnerable to exploitation as they were *'scared they might lose their jobs.'*

Healthcare

In terms of basic services, both Syrians and Lebanese were most concerned about the cost of healthcare. Preferences were similar with both opting for trusted local pharmacies and local doctor's clinics rather than public facilities which were considered poor quality and costly. Syrians noted they were often difficult to access because of long distances and checkpoints. **Costs of access reduced the value of UN subsidies for healthcare.** In Bekaa Valley IS it was claimed that the public hospital inflates costs for Syrian patients because they are receiving UN subsidies. Lebanese, especially families we lived with

who were facing huge medical costs for chronic disorders, shared their anger about what they felt was unfair subsidized healthcare for Syrians with no support for Lebanese. They also complained about subsidized medicines but several Syrian families we lived with actually faced very large costs of USD 200-400 per month for medication for their families and were not guaranteed that they would actually receive the UN subsidy. No Lebanese mentioned the pressure on health services resulting from the Syrian influx but rather focussed on the shared concern of high costs and the inequality in support. **Healthcare quality concerns were attributed to Government inefficiencies not to the pressure of Syrian population.**

Education

In all study locations, two shift systems were in operation for primary and middle school.

School-age Syrian refugee children mostly attend school (though it was never a high priority for the families) but **since the withdrawal of UN cash relief and school transport subsidies to some families, especially in South Akkar IS, some families no longer send their children to school. Lebanese and LTI Syrians are concerned about the quality of education** and the latter prefer to pay for private education or use networks to ensure their children get admission to the morning school sessions intended primarily for Lebanese. Much concern was raised about the quality of **afternoon shifts which were characterised as crowded, where tired teachers mete out punishments and learning was poor.** Lebanese families were disgruntled that they pay USD 150 per year as state school fees and have to buy uniforms whereas school *'is free for Syrians'* and some noted that UN resources intended for distribution to both Syrian and Lebanese students were often not given to Lebanese children because, they claimed, this was not monitored externally properly.

Garbage disposal

Syrians rarely mentioned garbage disposal as a concern. Syrians own immediate environment was generally clean and some went to lengths to dispose of their garbage thoughtfully. The most complaints were heard from Lebanese living near IS but often the problem was a wider waste disposal

problem and could not be attributed just to the IS. Where Syrians were renting accommodation (especially North Christian town) the Municipality provided street cleaning and garbage disposal services. In South Akkar IS and Mt. Lebanon coastal village the **Municipalities were generally described as inefficient** (even 'absent') and this was not attributed to resource pressure resulting from coping with Syrian influx.

Provision of aid

Aid organisations were most apparent in South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS where there are high concentrations of Syrian refugees, with at least 11 and 18 organisations operating in the area respectively. There were about five in Mt. Lebanon coastal village and none in North Christian town. Both Syrians and Lebanese did not identify aid organisations by name, and attributed all assistance and aid supplies as from 'umum'. Anything coming from UN (and others) was termed as from 'umum'. There were complaints about '*meaningless training*' which had filled time but had no benefit. There was nowhere to go for legal advice (except one NGO in Bekaa Valley IS) despite this often being the most needed assistance. UN food vouchers were still being provided in some study locations and not others and the basis for eligibility or reasons for cutting these were generally unclear. Where Syrians had tried to get clarity from aid organisations, including UN, through repeated phone calls, they shared that they were dismissed with messages which said their case was being reviewed but never actually got answers. They also talked about paying 'speed money' to get files and queries processed.

Lebanese commonly believed that most Syrians benefit from aid. Lebanese (and some Syrians) felt that there were Syrians benefitting who '*don't deserve to*'. Some **Syrians living in rented accommodation felt overlooked and felt that IS residents were better looked after. Poor (iv) and struggling (iii) Lebanese noted that no one assesses their needs or provides them with assistance.** However, when philanthropic aid distribution is done for Lebanese, status dictates that they feel embarrassed to receive it especially if this is done publicly.

Safety and security

In all study locations, both Syrians and Lebanese described their communities as 'safe.' We rarely observed any Lebanese security presence and none of the study locations currently enforce curfews. Nevertheless, both Christian study locations have prohibited the establishment of IS and have introduced local security measures such as CCTV and early warning systems when strangers enter the community. In both South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS it was considered safe to walk even at night and in both places **Syrians said they felt the media portrayed Syrians in a bad light.** Tents were left unlocked, even during the night and while away but Syrians contrasted this with the caution exercised by Lebanese and their preference to '*drive everywhere*' because it is safer. **We did not observe any graffiti with slogans against Syrians in any study location we lived in.** While Syrians universally indicated they felt safe (especially contrasting to the lack of security they faced in Syria) the most concern was expressed around checkpoints as most Syrians do not have official documentation. **Movement restrictions, especially for men, were largely self-imposed to minimise the risk of being detained.** The cost of renewing residency papers has led many to not bother and people prefer to take risks instead knowing that despite court orders which may require return to Syria, nobody ever does return. Often people compared the risks they had endured in Syria with the situation in Lebanon and were consequently unconcerned about the latter.

Syrians and Lebanese told us that they rarely experience a dispute, violence or crime that requires them to seek outside help and so discussions about this were hypothetical. Both Syrians and Lebanese said they prefer to resolve disputes by first seeking advice from family and neighbours and, if needed, the mediation of senior male leaders. They rarely involved police or other formal authorities. Overall, the Syrian viewpoint was to '*keep oneself to oneself*' and avoid conflict.

Relationships and Social Capital

Intra-Syrian relations especially in local communities are very strong and this very high level of bonding social capital derives from people living in close knit family groups or having come from the same community in

Syria and having shared the same struggles and supported each other. Syrian families spent much time interacting with Syrian neighbours outside in contrast to Lebanese who stayed inside their homes and socialized little. Syrian vendors offer goods on credit and neighbours and families provide loans. These close-knit communities also help one another to get work and access other opportunities but excluded outsiders. Facebook and WhatsApp were used extensively for sharing local knowledge and updates from home communities in Syria. The least strong relations were between LTI Syrians and Syrian 'newcomers'.

In contrast to the mostly very strong relationships between Syrians, the **relationships between Syrians and Lebanese can be described as weak bridging social capital defined by unequal power relations** (landlord, tenant; small business owner, employee). In both Christian study locations these relations have existed for generations and Syrians said they would depend on their employers for help. **The sponsorship system (kefala) polarizes relationships and Syrians in both Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS specifically used the word 'exploitation' to describe these relations.** LTI Syrians in North Christian town actively forge good relationships with Lebanese to further their desire for integration and permanent residency where the Lebanese control still dominates.

Syrian return

Lebanese mostly said they would like Lebanon to return to how it was before 2011. Most Lebanese thought that **refugees returning to Syria would be an improvement but mostly wanted LTI Syrians to stay and former seasonal work to resume.** In Mt. Lebanon coastal village few Lebanese wanted the Syrians to actually leave but rather wished they had less children. However, **all Lebanese we talked with recognized that Syria needs to be 'safe' before people can return** but queried why repatriation had not started to the areas now considered safe.

LTI Syrians generally regard Lebanon as home where they have invested in their futures, actively work at integration and pursue legal documentation. Some seasonal workers shared that they are considering living in Lebanon permanently and seek sponsorship, especially since their families joined them but the majority expect to live back in Syria and resume seasonal work to Lebanon. Very few actually knew anyone

who had returned and worried that there is '*nothing left*' to return to either because it has been destroyed, requisitioned or because they had to sell up in order to flee to Lebanon. Others were concerned about repercussions because of their assumed political views. The biggest worry was conscription into the Syrian Army for all men under 43 on return which was thought might provoke politically motivated abuse and physical danger. None of the Syrian refugees had specific plans on how to repatriate. **Relatively few Syrian refugees said they considered resettlement outside Syria,** suggesting Europe or Canada. Separation from families was the most cited reason not to pursue resettlement elsewhere. Though Syrians of all backgrounds had different priorities for the future, **all shared a common concern of being forced to go back to Syria.**

Study implications

The fact that people's views on Lebanese-Syrian relations were highly fluid and often influenced by perception and popular narrative underscores the challenge inherent in researching these issues and highlights the need for high levels of triangulation and reflexivity when doing so.

The study has shown that it is important to disaggregate views and opinions not just along national and confessional lines but according to how people themselves make distinctions between groups when they express opinions, including socioeconomic and (assumed) political affiliations. This has implications for how perception study data is disaggregated, presented and interpreted.

While relationships may be characterized by differences in power and perceived status they are not linked to violence or clear forms of insecurity. Lebanese and LTI Syrians shared common concerns when considering Syrian refugees. These concerns related primarily to equity of aid and support to access healthcare and schools, rather than pressure on services. As RPS findings do not fully highlight the importance of these issues, additional framings that consider who deserves aid and the impact of external support on relations within the Syrian community may provide needed insight.

Similarly, more transparency on external support provisions may address equity concerns as will inclusion of poor and disadvantaged Lebanese in both assessments and interventions.

Competition for work may be a popular way to explain challenging relations between Syrians and Lebanese but is very rarely supported by personal experience. The fact that most Syrian refugee families we interacted with rely on a single income earner, that they mostly occupy menial and manual work which Lebanese generally neither want or compete should be well communicated to balance the perception that Syrians are taking work away from Lebanese.

The findings of this study also provide a new basis for interpreting the concept of 'propensity for Negative Collective Action' used to understand the likelihood that tension will escalate to violence. Insights on the factors shaping responses to each component of this measure may provide a basis for developing a more accurate metric to assess these factors in communities in the future.

Introduction

This report presents the main findings from the first round of the Qualitative Research on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon using the Reality Check Approach (RCA). This study was conducted in February and March 2019. It was commissioned by UNDP to supplement the existing quantitative data on this topic to better understand relations between Syrians and Lebanese living in Lebanon.

Background

Lebanon hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees per capita in the world; it has also been the recipient of one of the largest per capita aid and support packages since 2016. Though there is a long history of Syrian presence and migration in Lebanon, Syrian refugees started arriving in large numbers at the outbreak of the Syrian War in 2011. At first, the number of arrivals was regarded as manageable. However, by 2013 the number of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon had grown significantly. Current estimates suggest there are over 1 million Syrian men, women and children living in Lebanon, who together with Palestinian refugees constitute between one quarter and one third of the country's total population.

Syrians live across Lebanon, with large settlements established in the Bekaa valley and in Northern Akkar. Despite intensive diplomatic and resourcing efforts to protect Syrian refugees, recent reports suggest that their socio-economic position remains fragile⁴. Though Lebanon's poverty rates

reportedly declined between 2016 and 2018, approximately 30% of Lebanese are considered 'poor'⁵. Indebtedness (to buy food, pay rent and health expenses) is very high, averaging nearly US\$ 800 per household. Existing data suggests that these factors have led Syrian refugee households to sell houses and land in Syria, along with household and productive assets, and has led to an increase in children working (20% of 15-17 year old youth work⁶). These challenges are compounded by the fact that an estimated 76% of Syrian refugees over age 15 do not have legal residency, limiting their freedom of movement and access to jobs, along with their ability to engage with public services and government functions, including obtaining documents like birth, marriage and death certificates.

Additionally, 36% of Syrian households do not have a working member⁷. Of those working, only 32% report doing so regularly. Most refugees work in construction, agriculture, transport and catering sectors. Of these, construction and agriculture are traditional areas of employment, which attracted Syrian migrant workers before the crisis and are not generally seen as competition for poor Lebanese. Syrians are viewed to be in competition with Lebanese workers in the transport and catering sectors, which are among the country's lowest

⁵ see <http://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-1-no-poverty.html>

⁶ 101 Facts and Figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis, (p45) Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and the International Affairs Office, American University of Beirut, 2018.

⁷ Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, 2017.

⁴ Uzelac, A and Meester, J, July, 2018 'Is there protection in the region? Leveraging Funds and Political Capital in Lebanon's Refugee Crisis' Conflict Research Unit of Clingendael.

paid (US\$ 200/month)⁸.

Existing data and media reports suggest that Lebanese citizens have been affected by the influx of Syrians in a number of ways, with particular effects felt by nearly 1 million Lebanese who are believed to be near or below the poverty line. Data suggests that perceived strain on public services and public spaces caused by Syrian refugees has contributed to a rise in tensions and resentment among host populations. This resentment is thought to be exacerbated by the fact that 87% of Syrian refugees and 67% of poorest Lebanese are living in the same 251 cadastres which were already the poorest in the country prior to the influx of Syrian refugees⁹.

Research commissioned by UNDP suggests that tensions between refugees and host communities appear to have worsened in recent months and emanate from four main concerns: (i) economic concerns (often manifest in a sympathy for the plight of refugees but concerns about economic pressure borne by host communities), (ii) religious and sectarian concerns, (iii) pressure on resources and utilities (particularly water and solid waste management) and (iv) security concerns (unsubstantiated claims of terrorist ' sleeper cells ' of Syrian men). Recent perception studies¹⁰ indicate that Syrians feel increasingly unwelcome. Furthermore, since the parliamentary elections in May 2018, hostile rhetoric directed toward Syrian refugees from politicians is also believed to have increased, whose sentiments are frequently echoed on social media.

A 'Tensions Monitoring System' has been established under the auspices of UNDP, UNHCR, and other partners to provide feedback on inter-community relations and emerging trends characterising this complex scenario. The system uses a number of different data sources for regular analysis and updates, and provides decision makers with a current pulse on the situation. A key element of the monitoring system is the quarterly series of RPS, conducted five times between May

2017 and March 2019. These surveys examine the perceptions of social stability and tensions between host communities and refugees among 5,000 respondents across 26 districts.

Purpose of this study

UNDP has requested longitudinal qualitative research to supplement RPS studies and its other streams of data specifically to gather insights from **refugees and Lebanese host communities themselves**. This citizen-generated data is '*crucial to unpack how inter-community tensions are related, why changes have been observed and how incidences could be mitigated*'¹¹.

With an understanding of community tensions as, '*a state of community dynamics which may lead to disorder, threaten the peace and stability of communities, or raise the levels of fear and anxiety in the whole, or a part of, the local community*',¹² this study aims to provide insights into these dynamics that quantitative surveys are not able to uncover.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to:

- Complement the existing time-series and cross-sectional perception surveys
- Unpack the complex situation of Syrian and Lebanese relations
- Provide rich contextual detail and to 'put a human face on the data collected'.

In order to meet these research objectives, this study will be carried out over four rounds, with two rounds occurring in 2019, and two rounds in 2020. Each round will include 4 unique study locations, which will be visited in years one and two. Revisiting locations will allow for an understanding of change over time and help build deeper rapport with communities.

⁸ UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) 2018, preliminary results, presented on July 23, 2018 in Beirut, Lebanon.

⁹ 101 Facts and Figures on the Syrian Refugee Crisis, (p41) Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and the International Affairs Office, American University of Beirut, 2018.

¹⁰ Ground Truth Solutions –Mixed Migration Platform 'Refugee Perceptions, Lebanon, round 2' August 2017.

¹¹ TORs Qualitative Research on Social Tension throughout Lebanon using the Reality Check Approach, page 1.

¹² Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo).

Methodology

This study uses the Reality Check Approach (RCA), a specific form of immersion-based research that aims to surface *rich and in-depth insights*, by living with people in their own homes for several days and nights, and experiencing their everyday lives. The approach extends the tradition of listening studies and beneficiary assessments by combining elements of these approaches with the essential element of immersion during which researchers live with people whose views are being sought, in this case refugees and host communities.

The RCA derives credibility and meets robustness and rigour requirements through triangulated, multi-layered informal interactions across multiple locations and spaces, and a collective pooling of unfiltered insights, privileging emic (insider) perspectives. Using RCA allows for informal interaction with families in their own spaces, with the people they interact with at work, market or socially, and with service providers, enabling triangulation of the information shared.

Based on this approach, this study employed the following research tools during the immersion:

Informal conversations: Given the importance of the need to diminish power distance and reduce disruption to normal life in conducting an RCA, formal data collection instruments were not used. Instead, the core of RCA was **informal conversations** which were used iteratively and widely to optimise opportunities for triangulation. These conversations were **spontaneous** and took place throughout the course of ordinary days while household members and the researchers jointly undertook chores and normal daily activities. The pace and direction of conversations was, as far

as possible, responsive to the study participants. Researchers did not take notes in front of people but they jotted down notes and quotes in field diaries in private during moments of downtime.

Observation: As RCA researchers lived with families within communities, they observed daily life in context, importantly at different times of the day (and night) and within different spaces and situations. This allowed researchers to observe differences between reported and actual behaviour, especially around tensions between different groups in the community, neighbourly relations, safety and security, job competition, financial concerns, and service provisions. Researchers also observed youth's daily life, children's schooling, and how families spend their time day to day.

Experience: RCA is based on the premise that experiential knowledge is a critical element of evaluation producing people-centred accounts. During the course of immersions, researchers visited key points of service, usually with their hosting families but sometimes alone. These places were mentioned in conversations. Visiting them or experiencing the service provided an opportunity for experiential triangulation of the insights. For example, researchers accompanied families to their place of business to observe their interactions with other members of the community.

Study Locations

As the first round in year one, this study was conducted in four governorates: Bekaa, North Lebanon, Akkar, and Mt. Lebanon. This selection was based on a number of key characteristics as agreed with UNDP, including¹³:

- Mixture of high and low Syrian presence
- Mixture of informal settlements (IS) presence and absence
- Diversity of confessional backgrounds
- Areas with strong historical relationships between Lebanese and Syrians.

Based on the above criteria, a long list was developed by reviewing overlapping areas between the 'Most Vulnerable Localities in Lebanon'¹⁴ map and the 'Mapping of Risk and Resources (MRR)' map¹⁵. This process also considered the UNHCR mapping of IS¹⁶. Together, these maps illustrate areas of both high and low refugee pressure, locations with the highest population of deprived Lebanese and refugees, and areas perceived to be the most risky. This process yielded a long list of potential study locations that meet the location selection criteria. A Lebanese security expert reviewed this list and provided a risk rating for each location. Using this rated list and based on the criteria discussed with stakeholders, the following four locations were

¹³ It is expected that these criteria may shift as the study is implemented in future rounds

¹⁴ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/45715>

¹⁵ http://40.71.92.5:8080/lhsp/portal/mrr_cluster_results.php

¹⁶ <https://unhcr.carto.com/builder/130e4572-12d6-4b3c-97c7-5645328a3435/embed>

chosen for this round of study, which were agreed with UNDP through their Field Coordinators located in each of the four operational regions in Lebanon.

To support the longitudinal aspiration of the study, it is expected that researchers will return to the same locations and where possible, the same host households, should future years of the study be commissioned.

Study Team

The study team comprised 10 researchers, including six Syrian, and four Lebanese researchers (see Annex 1). Researchers lived in each study location in sub-teams of four, which included a mix of men and women as well as Syrian and Lebanese researchers.

Study Participants

Researchers lived with a total of 16 households in which 12 were Syrian and 4 were Lebanese. Out of the 12 Syrian households, five lived in IS and 7 in rented accommodation. Host households were selected purposively based on scoping and informal discussions in the family and community. All host households were required to have at least two generations living together, and be the same nationality as the researcher (i.e, Lebanese researchers staying with Lebanese households and Syrian researchers staying with Syrian households).

While the household is defined as the families with whom the researcher stayed overnight, had close interaction and spent most time, researchers also spent time with their immediate neighbours, and had further detailed conversations with them, and

Table 1: How selected study locations meet the agreed criteria

Location reference name*	Governorate	Syrian presence	Presence of IS	Confessional backgrounds of majority		Strong historical relationship
				Lebanese	Syrian	
South Akkar IS	Akkar	high	yes	Sunni	Sunni	yes
Bekaa Valley IS	Beqaa	high	yes	Sunni	Sunni	yes
North Christian town	North	low	no	Maronite Christian	Sunni	yes
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	Mt Lebanon	low	no	Christian	Sunni	yes

*Actual place names have been omitted to protect study participants.

Table 2: Study participants

	Intention	Total Syrian	Total Lebanese
Host households	Close interactions, observations, and conversations with all members of the family to get comprehensive understanding of context, and understanding choice and behaviour at household level.	12 families	4 families
Focal households	Less detailed interaction than host household, mostly conversations to explore diversity of family experience, perspectives, different views, common issues, and to triangulate the host households insights.	281 people	169 people
Community members	Opportunistic engagements through informal conversations to explore their role, multiple perspectives, and understanding context for triangulation,	47 people	52 people

other opportunistic conversations with members of communities including local business owners, street vendors, service providers, shop owners and landlords.

The team had extended conversations over the period of four nights and days with a total of 707 people. The details of study participants can be found in Annex 3.

Further details on the study process are provided in Annex 4.

Ethical Considerations

The RCA team takes ethical considerations very seriously, especially considering the fact that the research involves living with people in their own homes. Like most ethnographic research, there is no intervention involved in RCA studies. At best, the study can be viewed as a way to empower study participants to be able to express their opinion. Researchers are not covert but become detached insiders.

As per American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics, RCA adopts an ethical obligation to people '*which (when necessary) supersede the goal of seeking new knowledge.*' Researchers '*do everything in their power to ensure that research does not harm safety, dignity and privacy of the people with whom they conduct the research*'¹⁷. Researchers asked people's verbal consent to be able to use their stories and insights, and assured people that they would keep their sharing off the record if they did not provide their consent. Researchers then signed a declaration stating they had received people's verbal consent to share the

insights in the collaborative analysis process. All the researchers were required to undergo Child Protection and Data Protection training in the level 1 training and study briefing and signed the Child Protection and Data Protection policies as part of their contracts. All data (written and visual) is coded to protect the identity of individuals, their families and communities. As a result, the exact locations and identities of households and others are not revealed in this report.

To ensure that host households did not incur costs resulting from hosting a researcher, at the end of the immersion, each researcher discreetly left a gift of basic food items for each host household (valued about LBP 20,000). As team members insist that no special arrangements are made for them, they help in domestic activities and do not disturb income-earning activities, the actual cost to hosts are negligible. Leaving gifts at the end of the immersion was important so people did not feel they were expected to provide better food for the researchers or get the impression that they were being paid for their participation.

Study Limitations

As with all research, this study has a number of limitations which are detailed below.

First, while the research team intended to stay with equal numbers of Lebanese and Syrian host households, the actual number included more Syrian families than Lebanese families. This resulted largely from a challenge in recruiting sufficient numbers of Lebanese researchers and ensuring their availability throughout the study. In addition, in one location a Lebanese researcher lived with a Syrian family as she was unable to identify a Lebanese family willing to host her.

¹⁷ American Anthropological Association (AAA) Code of Ethics, (1996: p. 2).

In order to mitigate this challenge, researchers were instructed to identify nearby Lebanese households as focal households in order to ensure that relationships of trust were built with Lebanese families and that their perspectives could also be included in the study in equal measure. As future study rounds allow researchers to have multiple months of notice ahead of each immersion, availability challenges related to Lebanese researchers are not anticipated.

Second, at times male Syrian researchers found it difficult to speak to female community members. Though some managed to establish trusted relationships with female host family members (particularly mothers and grandmothers), others explained that they felt their conversations with these individuals were not as deep as with other members of the household and community. As the research team comprises more female researchers than male, this challenge does not compromise the information drawn from female participants. As female researchers did not encounter the reverse challenge with male household members, it also does not compromise the information drawn from male participants.

Third, in a number of locations researchers remarked that there were relatively few children and young people present in the community. Though researchers made special effort to engage with youth, in many cases this limited the researchers' level of interaction with people of this age group. As such the perspectives contained in this report are largely those of adults.

Fourth, since the researchers lived in particular localities and interacted within small areas, the diversity of confessional backgrounds met was constrained. In two locations (South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS), all participants whether Lebanese or Syrian were Sunni. In the two other locations all Lebanese were Christian and all Syrians were Sunni.

Lastly, as with all qualitative research, the findings contained in this report are not intended to be generalised beyond the study population. Rather, they are intended to provide deeper insight into the dynamics that characterise a number of specific locales and are triangulated in such a way to maximise the internal validity of the findings. Though these findings may be used to inform analysis related to the study locations and locations of a similar profile, they should not be generalised beyond this.



Structure of the Report

This section provided an introduction and methodology used in this study. The following section presents the specific context of the study locations followed by key findings of the study related to: Syrian-Lebanese segmentation, interaction, access to basic services, provision of aid, job competition, safety and security, relationships, and future aspirations. These findings are used to contextualise and interpret Wave IV RPS findings, which are incorporated into each section as relevant. The report concludes with a section providing study implications drawn from the findings with particular relevance to policy, programming, and future research.

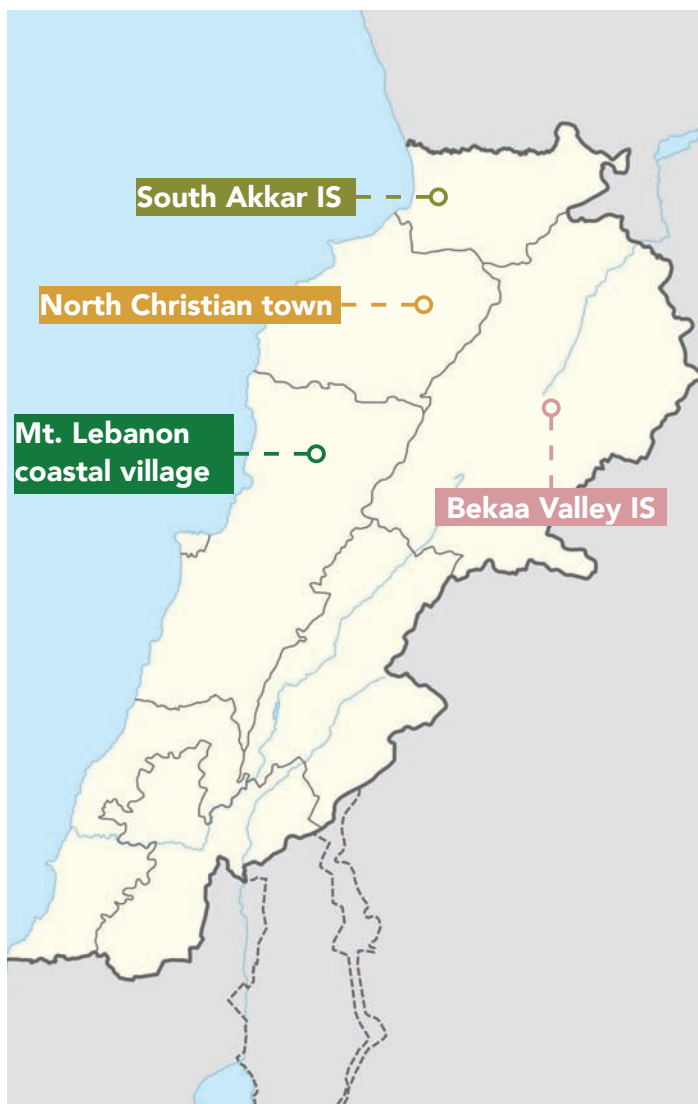
Findings

1

Context

This section provides details on each study location. As specific locations are kept confidential, we refer to these used a specific identifier for each.

Figure 1: Study locations



Bekaa Valley IS is a rural agricultural town and trading hub. Agriculture has historically defined the area as it is comprised of vast plain lands with less than 20% built environment. It has an estimated population of more than 100,000 of which approximately one third are thought to be Syrians and around 10% are Palestinian¹⁸. This reputedly represents one of the highest concentrations of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The Lebanese residents are mostly Sunni Muslims (85%) and include a small number of Greek Catholics who live somewhat separately. The Syrians living here are Sunni Muslims.

The proximity to the Syrian border and the agricultural focus of livelihoods means that Syrian agricultural workers have been coming for seasonal work here long before the Syrian crisis. These workers traditionally lived in seasonal worker camps and worked on the fertile plain lands where wheat, barley, root vegetables, particularly onions were the main crops. Since the crisis, these worker camps have often been expanded and new land has been rented out for IS to be established to accommodate extended families of these workers and other refugees from their communities of origin in Syria. Some of these settlements maintain the rule that in order to reside there, adult residents must work on the fields and failure to do so would result in the family being asked to move out. However, others live in IS established on a typical rental basis.

The increase in refugees has led to an increase in demand for work beyond agriculture. The town's trading centre employs Syrian workers in retail,

¹⁸ Data on population sizes are estimates based on multiple sources.



Tents occupied by Syrian refugees in IS in Bekaa.

hospitality, and services, for instance, as mechanics in workshops. Some Syrians have established their own informal enterprises such as in selling beverages, clothes and vegetables on the street side. All residents, Syrians and Lebanese alike, complain about problems with drinking water provision, flooding and waste disposal. There have been recent state investments in educational, health, and public space infrastructure which were intended to benefit host and refugee communities and build social cohesion.

In Bekaa Valley IS, we lived with two Syrian families in IS and two Lebanese families who lived in their own houses in areas where there were many Syrians renting properties nearby.

North Christian town is a large prosperous town in the North Governorate. The population of the wider region is estimated at 90,000 with approximately half residing in the town itself. The Syrian population estimates vary from a conservative figure of 2,230 to about 5,300 (trebling since the crisis). The Lebanese are Maronite Christians and the Syrians are Sunni. The town developed as the hub for agriculture, particularly fruit trees cultivation (olive, apples and pears), in the mountainous areas surrounding it. More recently there have been minor industrial developments near North Christian town.

The Syrians who lived here before the crisis were generally long term/permanent workers involved in caretaking the orchards and land, working in shops, and providing domestic services for

Lebanese families. The municipality carefully regulates all Syrians and ensures that residents are legally registered and have Lebanese sponsors. It has a well-functioning local system to identify newcomers and check their identities to limit unregulated refugee presence. Many of the Syrians live in rented accommodation in the old part of town which had been badly damaged and abandoned by its Lebanese occupants during the war. The town claims to have no IS but on the outskirts of the town, we observed small IS which may be relatively recent.

We lived with three Syrian families in very modest apartments/parts of houses in the old part of the town as well as with one Lebanese family who owned their own relatively modern apartment on the outskirts of the town. Many Syrians also rented properties in this part.

South Akkar IS is a town situated near but not on the coast. It is located in one of the poorest regions of Lebanon with very high unemployment rates. It has a large population of about 390,000, of whom one third are Syrians refugees. The high concentration of refugees is attributed to close proximity to the Syrian border and, in particular, the proximity to hotspots of Homs, Idlib and Hama. However, it has also attracted refugees from other parts of Lebanon because it is considered secure (there is reputed high levels of host hospitality shaped by religious and cultural duty and a history of a porous border which allowed two way movement of people). Additionally, the cost of living is regarded as low. Both Lebanese and Syrians are primarily Sunni

although there are small Greek Orthodox, Maronite, and Alawite populations here as well. The presence of Alawites results in periodic tensions based on political affiliations. The main livelihood in and around the town is agriculture, especially the cultivation of cereals and vegetables, fishing, construction, and some light industry (e.g. plastics). There are large numbers of poly-greenhouses where vegetables such as tomatoes, zucchini, cabbage, and herbs are cultivated for local and Beirut market. Some people had traded tomatoes across the border in Syria long before the crisis.

We stayed with three Syrian families here who all lived in IS. Most people in these IS had lived there for 4-5 years and knew each other. We also stayed with one Lebanese family who originated from the town and lived close to an IS in their own concrete two-storey house.

Mt. Lebanon coastal village is a very small coastal town in Mount Lebanon Governorate which rises from the sea to hills behind. It has a predominantly Christian Lebanese population of approximately 3,300 but situated within a larger district of about 167,000. Unofficial estimates of Syrians living in the wider area range between 3,000-10,000 and they are

said to come primarily from one area of Idlib and are primarily Sunni. There are no IS in the town as these have been banned by the municipality. Main livelihood opportunities here are in fruit and vegetable cultivation; there are few other economic activities as epitomised by a comatose tourism industry and many closed shops and businesses. Many Lebanese youth have migrated away from the town because of the lack of jobs. Most Syrians had previous connections with the area as they were previously seasonal agricultural workers who have brought their families since the crisis. They provide labour in the greenhouses where cash crops such as salad, tomatoes, beans, cabbage, and herbs are cultivated especially on the coastal plain.

We lived with Syrian families who rented modest concrete houses or apartments from Lebanese landlords. These families worked on small farms or greenhouses which were mainly located on small plots of land immediately adjacent to the sea. Some of their Syrian neighbours worked in restaurants or as domestic helpers. We were not able to live with Lebanese families here.

Table 3: Summary of study locations

	Concentration of Syrians	Health	Schools	Security	Religious Institutions	Recreational areas
Bekaa Valley IS	High concentration Living in IS	Public hospital in town but Syrians say 'not welcomed here'- prefer local clinics	Seven schools in town including madrassah and NGO schools for Syrians	Police station but little to no patrols	Many mosques	Rentable football pitches
North Christian town	Low concentration No IS	Closest public hospital 30 mins drive Residents prefer private clinics and pharmacies in town	Two primary schools, one state high school, and private school outside town	Police station in town but no obvious patrols- people say they 'feel safe'	Churches No official mosques but shared prayer spots	Football pitches Many picnic spots and restaurants but used by Lebanese
South Akkar IS	High concentration Living in IS	Closest public hospital 15mins drive (poor quality) Local pharmacies are preferred	Closest one is a 20 min bus ride (US\$13/month)	No nearby police post	Closest mosque 20 minutes walk	none
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	Low concentration No IS	Nearest public hospital (10-20 minutes drive) Local doctors clinic preferred	Two local schools (one private, one public) Otherwise have to take car (10-20min)	No police station	Churches No mosques (not sanctioned by municipality)	Public beaches only

2

Segmentation of Syrian and Lebanese

We interacted with a number of distinct groups of both Syrian and Lebanese people across study locations. These distinctions are important, as there were clear differences in people's perceptions, relationships, and attitudes towards each group.

We observed in our interactions that the Syrians were largely defined by themselves and others according to: when they arrived in Lebanon, the circumstances under which they came, and their religious and cultural background. We observed that Lebanese largely defined themselves according to their socioeconomic status. These categories influenced how Syrians and Lebanese perceived and related to each other.

For Syrian, these categories included refugees, seasonal workers and long-term inhabitants).

The largest group of Syrians we interacted with were **Syrian refugees**. These families lived primarily in IS in Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS, though were present across all study locations in both IS and rented accommodation. Most of these families were Sunni Muslim. Refugees we met mostly lived without valid legal residency; some never acquired it and those that did often did not renew it. Only a few refugees we met had 'UN files' noting them as refugees. These were the least well off group of Syrians that we met, and primarily depended on casual labour, aid, and loans from family and neighbours to survive. We observed that many Lebanese looked down on refugees. One host father in Bekaa Valley IS distinguished between Syrians who are 'well off', 'respectful' and 'decent,' and refugees '*who are dirty and no matter what, will always be that way.*'

All Syrian refugees we met arrived in Lebanon from Syria between 2011 and 2013, often for the first time. These people told us that they had come to Lebanon because Syria had become too dangerous, and often linked this danger to a specific incident. Refugee families in Bekaa Valley IS we lived with mentioned bombings and the deterioration of security in 2012 as their primary reason for leaving. A number of families in South Akkar also shared that they left Syria '*because they did not support the regime,*' or were '*loyal to the resistance.*' All recent Syrian arrivals we met were clear that they felt forced to leave and that coming to Lebanon was the easiest option. Most refugees

we met view themselves as living in Lebanon temporarily and ultimately plan to return to Syria.

Syrian refugees also identified a number of subgroups that they considered to be different from majority of refugees. For instance, people in an South Akkar IS spoke about 'Nawar' people, who had come from Syria over ten years ago. They used derogatory term 'nawar' when discussing these individuals, and explained that these people have no nationality, and are neither Lebanese nor Syrian. We observed that many people here described them in a derogatory way, and insisted we do not speak to them. A number of households pointed to an incident when the Nawar community had rushed an aid distribution event and '*tried to take it over.*' They explained that because of this incident, the Nawar people are '*not worthy of being given a hand up*' because they '*don't know how to handle it.*' In addition, one Bedouin family we lived with in Bekaa Valley IS considered themselves distinct from other Syrians. They shared and our observations confirmed that they limited interaction with people outside their family and tribe, and lived separately from others on the outskirts of town among kin members.

Syrian seasonal workers lived primarily in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, with some also present in South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS. These people lived primarily in rented accommodation provided by the landowner, and were also Sunni Muslim. Most seasonal workers we met had at one time legal residency sponsored by their employers. In some cases, they said this was still valid, while in others it had expired. Seasonal workers were generally better off than refugees and worked in seasonal agriculture or in tourist resorts. Some were also recipients of relief aid.

Male seasonal workers we met told us that workers have been coming to Lebanon for seasonal agriculture work for many decades; in some cases this was also something that their fathers had done, occasionally bringing their families along for short periods. One Lebanese family in Mt. Lebanon coastal village said that Syrians had always been coming to this area, '*it's just more now.*' Another Lebanese man here explained that it used to be '*only men*' who came to this area for seasonal work, and '*now the whole family comes*' and does not go back.

Many seasonal workers came from Idlib in Syria. They told us that once they decided to bring their families to live with them in Lebanon as their

home communities became dangerous. They connected this danger to the capture of the city and surrounding areas by Opposition Armed Groups (OAG).

Long-term inhabitants (LTI) lived primarily in North Christian town and were mostly Sunni Muslim, with a minority being Christian. The majority of LTI Syrians we met had legal residency sponsored through a Lebanese individual. Some LTI Syrians shared that their long-term residency allowed them to act as sponsors to other Syrians.

LTI Syrians were better off than other Syrians we met. Many managed or operated shops on behalf of Lebanese owners, while a few ran one-man businesses independently. In other cases in North Christian town, LTI Syrians ran shops on behalf of a remote Lebanese owner. This is a mutually advantageous arrangement that circumvents the rules regarding Syrians establishing businesses and entails a level of mutual trust that we did not observe between Lebanese and other groups of Syrians. Other LTI Syrians living in this area also effectively own their own businesses. Lebanese people across all study locations portrayed LTI Syrians as contributing to the Lebanese economy, in contrast to more recent Syrian arrivals who they believed extracted benefits, jobs or aid. No LTI Syrians we met received aid.

We observed that LTI Syrians appeared to look down on refugees, and purposefully sought to set themselves apart in conversation, noting that refugees spoke in a strong Syrian dialect and tended to undertake day labour and other manual jobs. Syrian refugees in all study locations except Bekaa Valley IS commonly told us that they depended on LTI Syrians for networks and to access jobs. We observed that though LTI Syrians often provided this help, refugees were envious of the connections and opportunities that LTI Syrians had in Lebanon by virtue of their embeddedness, and, often, legal residency status.

LTI Syrians in North Christian town told us that they have lived permanently in Lebanon for decades, and that they used to visit when they were young with their families who were seasonal workers, or were born in Lebanon. Others told us that they came to Lebanon as young people purposely seeking employment. Many spoke with a local Lebanese accent and took active steps to integrate themselves and their families into the Lebanese community, despite the fact that some did not share the same faith as the surrounding

Christian community. They also actively sought to build networks and make a special effort to send their children to the morning school shift that normally only caters to Lebanese children (see section 5 on basic services). LTI Syrians we met described Lebanon as their home and did not express any plans to return to Syria.

We observed that religious and cultural commonalities also influenced how Syrians and Lebanese both defined and related to one another. Religiosity varied by location and sub-group as well. In South Akkar IS, we observed Syrian Sunni Muslims were the most conservative of all Syrians we interacted with, as well as more conservative than their Lebanese neighbours. These individuals largely came from rural areas near Homs in Syria, where they also depended on farming for their livelihood. These refugees placed a high value on Quranic knowledge and observed a separation between men and female non-relatives (*pardah*). A number of Syrians here also told us about the importance of having large families, which they explained was '*Allah's will.*' This contrasted with Syrians in all other study locations like Bekaa Valley IS, where we observed that Syrians prayed regularly and attended mosque for Friday prayers, but did observe strict *pardah*. While the Lebanese we met were more religious in South Akkar IS than in Bekaa Valley IS, in both locations they did not observe strict *pardah*.

This contrasted with Mt. Lebanon coastal village and North Christian town, where the majority of Sunni LTI and seasonal worker Syrians lived among the Christian Lebanese majority. Though in both locations, Syrians commonly described themselves as religious, we observed that in both cases men and women largely interacted without any restrictions. LTI Syrians in North Christian town explained that they don't invite their Lebanese neighbours to their homes '*out of respect*' as they will be '*drinking and eating different meals*' including pork.

Throughout the study we were aware that these identities and labels played a role in determining who was included and who was excluded from a community. For example, Syrians would refer to '*us Sunnis*' when chatting to Lebanese researchers, assuming the latter were Sunni and had a shared identity. While in other conversations, distinctions were pointed out. For instance, Syrian Sunnis living in South Akkar IS used the phrase '*you and us*' with a Lebanese researcher, noting her Shia identity rather than her Lebanese identity. Similarly,

in predominantly Christian study locations like North Christian town and Mt. Lebanon coastal village, Lebanese Christians often used the fact that Syrian there were Muslim to explain the separation between these two communities. In some instances, particularly in Akkar, Lebanese Sunnis noted their '*common Muslim identity*' as a factor that unites them with Syrians, which a number of people framed as more important organising principle than nationality. Despite establishing common ground between Lebanese and Syrians in many cases, we observed that these commonalities did not always translate into equal relationships between Syrians and Lebanese (see section 4, on relationships).

Syrians we met in all study locations explained that these religious divisions also interacted with political divisions. While these divisions sometimes related to domestic Lebanese politics, people more often connected these divisions to either support for or opposition to the Government of Syrian (Pro-GoS). In Mt. Lebanon coastal village, one Syrian family said '*it was better to deal with Sunni (Lebanese) people rather than Shia people,*' as Sunni regardless of nationality were less likely to support the Pro-GoS. In North Christian town, Syrians also connected the Lebanese Christian majority with support for the pro-GoS. We noticed there, and in South Akkar IS, Syrians rarely discussed politics, or did so in hushed voices.

In addition, we observed that there were a number of socio-economic categories that defined how Lebanese people we met viewed and interacted with both Syrians and other Lebanese.

Rich land owners lived in all study locations, but primarily near Bekaa Valley IS and Mt. Lebanon coastal village, with some also present in North, and were either Sunni Muslim or Christian. These individuals owned large holdings of agricultural land and depended on Syrian and Lebanese day-labourers (Bekaa Valley IS) or Syrian farmers that also lived on the land (Mt. Lebanon coastal village) they tended. We generally only heard about these individuals and did not meet them in person, as they either lived in different city/village or in a more remote part of the study location.

Lebanese small business owners we met were primarily in North Christian town and Mt. Lebanon coastal village and were Christian. These individuals were Christian lived comfortably and owned small businesses and restaurants, where

they employed poorer Lebanese. Many small business owners we met also employed LTI Syrians in a range of capacities ranging from employees to managers and acting owner/operator. Here and in other study locations, individuals in this group also employed Syrian refugees as cleaners or workers in kitchens and in stock rooms. In these cases, the Lebanese would sometimes sponsor Syrians to obtain legal residency. Many Lebanese small business owners we met in North Christian town spoke of LTI Syrians in a positive light, describing them as trusted people and good workers.

Newly struggling Lebanese were present across study locations and came from a variety of backgrounds. This includes individuals who owned small businesses, artisans and skilled laborers who have suffered during the recent economic downturn due to their inability to access loans and the low demand for construction. For example, one family we lived with in North Christian town told us that their secondhand vehicle business collapsed when potential buyers were unable to access bank loans. Though they used to live comfortably, they now struggle to support their family, and largely rely on a daily wage they earn from helping in a brother's livestock trading business, along with their savings. In another Lebanese family we lived with in Bekaa Valley IS, the father shared that he was struggling to support his family since the downturn in the construction industry (also related to non-issuance of bank loans) and a decline in demand for metal rod products.

Small-scale Lebanese farmers/land owners lived primarily in South Akkar IS and were Sunni Muslim, with some also present in Bekaa Valley IS. These individuals owned small plots of agricultural land, which they attended to themselves, and often lived on or nearby. In some cases these individuals would also hire day labourers to work on their land, which may be either poor Lebanese or Syrian refugees.

Poor Lebanese lived primarily in South Akkar IS and were Sunni Muslim. These individuals primarily depended on skilled labour or agricultural day labour to survive. In discussions, poorer Lebanese we met made a specific effort to separate themselves from Syrian refugees, also employed in agricultural labour. In many cases they did so by speaking of themselves as superior and gave examples of the jobs that Syrians did that were more physically taxing and lower paid than the ones that Lebanese did (see section 7 on job competition).

3

Interaction

In all study locations, we observed that Lebanese, Syrian refugees, and LTI Syrian generally lived very separate lives. Though Lebanese and Syrians often lived in close proximity, these groups occupied distinct physical spaces. This was most clear near South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS, where though Lebanese families lived less than five minutes walk away from an IS, they rarely interacted with the Syrian refugees living there. In North Christian town, LTI Syrians lived in rented accommodation in one part of town and Syrian refugees lived in an IS on the edge of town. However, no LTI Syrian or Lebanese mentioned this IS over the course of our visit, and a number of people said that there were 'no IS here.'

Across study locations, Syrian refugees and seasonal workers told us that they often avoid interacting with Lebanese. In Mt. Lebanon coastal village, this appeared to be related to their perceived economic differences with the Lebanese population of the town, who most Syrians spoke as better off. In South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS, however, reluctance of Syrian refugees to interact was instead related to feelings of vulnerability, particularly for those without valid legal residency as they feared both being stopped by the police as well as exploitation (see section 8 on security and section 4 on relationships). This separation was less prominent in North Christian town, where LTI Syrians were more integrated into the Lebanese community.

'It seemed like they both live in their own world.'

Field notes, South Akkar IS (referring to Lebanese hosts and Syrian refugees).

Though interactions between Syrians and Lebanese were relatively limited, we observed a number of key areas where interactions take place, outlined below.

Economic interactions: Lebanese and Syrians most commonly interacted in work situations. In Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS, this often took the form of casual or day labour, where a Lebanese landowner or farmer acted as a supervisor or broker for Syrian labour. In Bekaa Valley IS, Syrian refugees tended to work for individual Lebanese landowners, while in South Akkar IS Syrian refugees often worked for a number of them. Similarly, in Mt. Lebanon coastal village Syrian seasonal workers were very engaged with their landlords in the daily aspects of managing the land they tended to on their behalf, as well as on maintenance of their houses.

RPS Findings

Across all waves, the nature of inter-communal interaction remained relatively constant, nationally, with interaction in 'in the street' 'at work' and 'in the shop' occurring more commonly than in other environments or scenarios. Overall the levels of intercommunal interaction have declined across the four waves (RPS wave IV report, p.32).



In North Christian town LTI Syrians often worked alongside Lebanese colleagues in businesses and in some instances were in business with Lebanese individuals (see section 7 on competition for work). Here, some LTI Syrians also managed shops or ran small businesses that were integrated into the local economy, attracting Lebanese and Syrian customers. In North Christian town, people explained that poorer Lebanese are happy for recent Syrian arrivals to rent their houses, which had been damaged in the war, though this was a practical arrangement that benefitted both parties, rather than a specific sign of friendliness.

Interactions in public spaces: Across all study locations, we observed that there were very few public spaces where Syrians and Lebanese could

RPS Findings

'Daily' and 'regular' interactions have decreased steadily, including from Wave III to Wave IV. This includes religious spaces and is strongest in 'social circles' (not defined in the survey question).



interact. Though we observed that in all study locations Syrians and Lebanese regularly pass each other on the road, in most cases we did not observe them interacting socially in this or other public spaces. This contrasted to how most Syrians interacted with other Syrians, which tended to be social and familiar. The exception was in North Christian town, where we saw that football fields were the main public spaces available. In Bekaa Valley IS, adolescent boys used the communal field to play football, but these teams were largely organised (informally) into Syrians and Lebanese.

Syrian boys in Bekaa Valley IS told us that they often played matches against Syrian teams from other camps, and in some cases played against Lebanese teams. Teenage boys there were very involved in these football clubs and discussed them as one of the main sources of fun in the community.

Though there was a beach in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, people said that Syrians and Lebanese both rarely go there, as this is considered primarily for tourists. Here and in North Christian town, we observed that Lebanese spend time in coffee shops, and Syrians said they rarely do.

RPS Findings

Regular interaction with persons of the other nationality 'in social circles' has declined. Those saying they 'never' interact with persons of the other nationality. Increase from min 9.6% (Wave II) to a max of 25.3% (Wave IV).

Rates of social interaction between Lebanese and Syrians have slowly but persistently declined over the four waves of surveying, and where these rates of social interaction have declined, both Lebanese and Syrian assessments of the quality of relations have worsened (RPS wave IV report, p.40).



Interactions in school: Syrian and Lebanese children commonly said that because they attended separate school shifts they did not interact in school (see section 5 on basic services for further discussion on schools). In all study locations, people told us that these groups were generally strictly separated.

The exception was in North, where some LTI Syrian parents had made a special effort to enrol their

children in the morning shift. One Syrian mother we lived with said that she was able to do this because she has a 'good relationship' with the school principal. Other LTI Syrian families we lived with explained that this extra effort helped guarantee their children a better quality education, including learning French. One LTI Syrian father we lived with told us that he pays to send his seven year old son to private school explaining that this decision also has symbolic importance, as '*when you pay for private school you are equal with the Lebanese.*' Here, some Lebanese parents complained that LTI Syrians had joined the morning shift, and were concerned that Syrians had a different culture and religion than the Christian majority in the town. LTI Syrians here shared that Lebanese complain that Syrian students will not be able to keep up with their Lebanese counterparts, but noted that here, LTI Syrian children in the morning shift were doing as well if not better than the Lebanese students.

Very few Lebanese children in any study location said they had Syrian friends, and vice versa. The exception was in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, where one son (9 years old) of a Syrian seasonal worker family we lived with said that he had Lebanese friends who he feels accepts him, and whose homes he visits to play. We observed many Syrian boys freely playing and '*going around the neighbourhood,*' and they explained that this is how they made Lebanese friends. However, we observed that many Syrian girls did not have these same opportunities, as their families often restricted their daughters from going out from the immediate vicinity of their house.

Interactions at religious events: In study locations like South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS where Syrian Sunnis were living alongside Lebanese Sunni communities, these groups attended the same mosque. However, Syrians in both study locations explained that the interactions between them and the Lebanese at these events were largely superficial and had not led to connections or friendships with the Lebanese community. Though many Syrian families we met considered themselves religiously observant, they said that they mostly prayed at home and that their involvement in the religious community was limited to attending Friday prayers. No Syrian host household we met mentioned being involved in community or social activities led by the mosque.

RPS Findings

Interaction in religious events is low – ‘never’ + ‘rarely’ = about 75% and is the highest ranked of the six options (in the street, shop, social circles, work, activities organised by NGOs & local organisations, religious events) (RPS wave IV, p.32).



People told us that a small number of LTI Syrian Christians did attend Lebanese churches in North Christian town. However, in Lebanese Christian communities, Syrian Muslims had even fewer opportunities to engage with Lebanese communities. This was the case in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, where the Sunni Syrian community had tried to build a mosque a few years ago. Syrians here said that the municipality ‘did not allow them’ to build this and that as the closest mosque was approximately 20 minutes drive away, most Syrians did not attend. Similarly, in North Christian town there were no mosques in the Christian community we stayed in.

External support: In all study locations, there was little evidence of activities designed specifically to improve interaction either at community level or facilitated by NGOs or others. Both Syrians and Lebanese living in South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS told us that programmes and NGOs working there targeted their activities at Syrians exclusively. In Mt. Lebanon coastal village and North Christian town we observed very few programmes aiming to support either community, none of which aimed to support any form of interaction or bring communities together (see section 6 for further discussion on aid).

4 Relationships and Social Capital

This section discusses relationships within the Syrian community and between Syrian and Lebanese communities across study locations.

Table 4: Wave IV RPS findings, social bonds*

% of respondents who agree that ‘social bonds between communities’ might have facilitated good relations between Lebanese and Syrians.

Location closest to	Syrian	Lebanese
Bekaa Valley IS	31%	10%
North Christian town	9%	1%
South Akkar IS	53%	6%
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	72%	41%

*Wave IV survey findings. (2019). UNDP & RPS Interactive Dashboard. Host-Community and Syrian Refugee Communal Relations in Lebanon.

Available at <http://bit.ly/ark-communalrelations>

Consistent with the RPS data, we observed that Lebanese across locations did not value relationships with Syrians. Though RPS findings show this as highest in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, in all locations lower proportions of Lebanese felt social bonds might have contributed to bonds between communities than Syrians did. Though Syrian refugees in particular were hesitant to take steps to build these, we found that they often depended on their connections with Lebanese to navigate many aspects of daily life, which may explain their high levels of agreement with this question.

In North Christian town, RPS data shows that the lowest proportions of both Lebanese and Syrians feel social bonds might have improved inter-community relations. We found bonds between Lebanese and LTI Syrians here to be the strongest example of bridging social capital relationships in any study location. The fact that these bonds existed before Syrian refugees came may therefore be why such low proportions feel that these would not have helped inter-community relations.

Across most study locations, we observed high levels of bonding social capital (within group) relationships among Syrians, particularly refugees and seasonal workers, though in some cases these relationships were also characterised by jealousy and tension. In some instances, we observed signs of strong bridging (between group) social capital between Syrians and Lebanese; these relationships were not reciprocal and were characterised by control by Lebanese and vulnerability by Syrians.

Bonding relationships among Syrians

We observed that Syrian refugees and seasonal workers commonly lived among immediate and extended family. Many of these family members, they said, had purposefully moved to the same location in Lebanon so that they could continue to be together. This was particularly true in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, where the majority of Syrian seasonal workers we met came from the same area in Syria. Syrians here often spoke about the importance of living among people they were familiar with and that this helped them continue to feel connected to Syria.

Overall, relationships within the Syrian community in each study location were commonly characterised by high levels of cohesion and social capital. In these study locations, we observed a particular sense of closeness among Syrians refugees and seasonal workers and got the sense that all Syrians commonly interacted with and knew each other, and that these relationships provided significant benefits. Unlike Lebanese living in these locations who largely kept to themselves and stayed in their own homes and gardens, we observed that Syrian women spent much of the day visiting each other's houses or tents to socialise. Syrian men in these communities also commonly spent time visiting each other, watching football together or smoking shisha. Syrians living in these communities said they often sought the advice of their neighbours and elders in the community rather than seeking help from more formal systems, as these individuals were more respected in their community and their judgment carried more weight (see section 8 on security).

For Syrian refugees and seasonal workers in particular, these bonding relationships helped them cope in times of crisis. For example, in South Akkar IS a single refugee man who had made his way to the IS after being held captive by a non-state armed group for five years said that even though no one in the camp knew him, people gave him materials to build his tent along with food to eat each evening, *'even though the neighbours were very poor.'* Another Syrian family living in this community reflected on this, saying *'all we have is each other.'*

In both South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS, Syrian refugees also shared that they often borrowed money from family or other members of the Syrian refugee community to cover unexpected health expenses and other needs. In these study

locations, we also observed that Syrian vendors in the IS regularly allowed other Syrians to purchase food, clothing, and household items on credit. Refugee families we lived with in Bekaa and South Akkar IS said that their income from agricultural labour is so unpredictable that they depend heavily on this credit to meet their basic needs.

In addition, Syrian refugees and seasonal workers also depend on relationships with other Syrians to find work. In Mt. Lebanon coastal village, seasonal workers shared that they had found their current employers through other Syrians (often family) had pre-existing jobs and connections. Similarly, Syrian refugees in South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS said they depended on their extended families already living here to find work. While women in South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS said they moved around the neighbourhood in search of daily labour for themselves, men here told us that they were particularly dependent on these connections as they did not feel comfortable moving around to look for work, even in the day (see section 8 on security). In North Christian town, LTI Syrians told us that they had also helped other Syrians who had come to Lebanon more recently to find work and access networks.

Beyond their immediate communities, we observed that Syrian families across study locations were also in touch with a wide network of family and friends via Facebook, Whatsapp, and multi-player internet games, which further strengthened the bonds within this community. This often included people still living in Syria who sent frequent updates on the areas those living in our study locations had left behind in Syria. During our stay, one host father in South Akkar IS received a number of voice notes *'from relatives in Jordan'* and other countries that *'belonged to the same tribe.'* In Bekaa Valley IS, we observed that Syrians spent large portions of each day playing online games like Players Unknown Battlegrounds (PUBG), which they used to chat with other Syrians across Lebanon and the Middle East, even those they had never met. This high level of connectivity meant that people felt up to date with events in Syria and with family members elsewhere.

We observed that these strong bonds among Syrians were often limited to peoples' families, tribe, and immediate neighbours. Many refugees and seasonal workers were often jealous of those outside their immediate communities who they thought unjustly received more aid than they did. Syrians with these complaints often highlighted

socio-economic differences between them and these groups, saying that a person was *'rich and didn't deserve it.'* In South Akkar IS, while Syrian refugees were not jealous of the four families in their own camp who received the US\$173 aid benefit, they were extremely jealous of the Syrian refugee families in the other camp who they believed received this undeservingly (see section 6 on aid). We observed that the lack of transparency in aid allocation and people's poor understanding of this process fueled this type of jealousy by allowing rumors to flourish.

We also observed that relationships between LTI Syrians and refugees were much weaker than those among Syrian refugees and seasonal workers. Though many LTI Syrians in North Christian town told us that they had helped Syrians who arrived more recently in finding work, some LTI families here had also begun to feel resentful of Syrian refugees. One LTI Syrian man we lived with explained that he had helped Syrian refugees find work locally, and that he now worried that they might threaten his job. LTI Syrian families here also worried about the rising public concern over refugees and feared that the government of Lebanon might expel all Syrians. As a result, they said they have begun to resent the Syrian refugees, whose presence they see as threatening their plans to stay in Lebanon permanently.

We observed that bridging relationships between Lebanese and Syrians varied by study location, but overall were relatively weak.

Across all study locations, we observed that Syrians rarely had relationships with poor Lebanese. Rather, Syrians we met focused on their relationships with their employers, sponsors who were landowners, business owners, or farmers.

Syrians often received support from Lebanese with whom they had these pre-existing relationships. Syrian seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village turned to their Lebanese employers or landlords for help in many situations, including related to their, housing, employment, as well as *'if someone is sick or they need to borrow money.'* She explained that if anything *'more serious'* arises, her son *'works for a Lebanese man in another town who can help, and who has helped in the past.'* Though most Syrians we met living in Mt. Lebanon coastal village said they had *'good relationships'* with the Lebanese living there, these were largely limited to Lebanese that Syrians already knew rather than the general public.

RPS Findings

Consistently, over all four Waves, *'pre-existing relations between Lebanese and Syrians'* was the most-often cited factor for peace, (approx. 27.8%, RPS wave IV p.30).



Though Syrian refugees in Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS did not depend on Lebanese individuals to the same extent, they also gave examples of instances where individual Lebanese farmers and small-scale land owners had done them a favour. For example, Syrians in Bekaa Valley IS said they don't pay rent *'because the [Lebanese] landlord is a good person.'*

Though many Syrian seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village gave the example of a Lebanese landowner who had constructed free housing for Syrians living there, they commented that most other Lebanese landowners here had not supported this. Syrian seasonal workers we met here said that the *'neighbours complained about this'* and said they would bring *'crimes and gangs'* to the area, prompting the municipality to *'force him to tear the houses down.'* One Syrian woman we lived with here explained this saying that the broader *'Lebanese community here don't care about us,'* highlighting the importance of these pre-existing relationships in accessing other forms of support.

The strongest form of bridging social capital we observed was between LTI Syrians and Lebanese business owners in North Christian town. We observed a strong *'insider'* dynamic, where LTI Syrians had become part of the *'insiders'* within the community following decades of active relationship building. A number of LTI Syrians told us that they had made special efforts over these years to build relationships with Lebanese shop owners and public officials in their community, which they discussed as vital to their success economically and socially.

However, across study locations, we did not observe any examples of reciprocal or mutual forms of support between Lebanese and Syrians. Though these forms of support sometimes related to a practical event (fixing a leak, providing discounted rent), in most cases this support was an

effort to compensate for Syrians' lack of networks in Lebanon. As these bridging relationships between Syrians and Lebanese were not reciprocal, they entailed inherent inequalities that in some cases made Syrians vulnerable and left them feeling 'exploited.'

Syrian refugees living in South Akkar IS often connected exploitation to sponsorship requirements, the legal provisions related to the Kefala system under which Syrians are dependent on their Lebanese sponsor. One Syrian refugee in South Akkar IS said that he was concerned about legalising his residency because he thought that the Lebanese sponsors would try to exploit him. Other Syrian refugees here said that each year their Lebanese sponsor expects more money beyond the US\$200 filing fee, as he knows that they have no choice but to pay him. Another Syrian refugee family in South Akkar IS said that when he first sought a Lebanese sponsor, the 'first question' they would ask is 'do you have a daughter for marriage.' He found this extremely offensive and said that he would 'rather die than accommodate this,' and has since given up on finding a sponsor. One Lebanese business owner we lived with here commented on relations between the two groups, saying that '[relations between Syrians and Lebanese] are not so bad if we have the power over Syrians.'

Though these complaints were most emphatic in South Akkar IS, Syrians refugees in Bekaa Valley IS also shared similar complaints and used the term 'exploiting' when discussing sponsorship arrangements. In these discussions, many Syrian refugees told us of a palpable sense of strain between the Syrian and Lebanese communities there.

Syrian seasonal workers we lived with in Mt. Lebanon coastal village also shared similar experiences. One Syrian man here told us that his Lebanese sponsor asks for 'more and more money each year' to sponsor him, as he knows that he must keep the same sponsor until he leaves Lebanon and cannot change jobs without the sponsor's permission. He explained that because of this he opted not to renew his residency papers, as 'I don't want to put my neck in his hands.'

In addition to sponsorship, a number of Syrian refugees in South Akkar IS also explained that their Lebanese bosses would also take advantage of their often dire economic situation. One Syrian refugee family we lived with here said that

Lebanese farmers they worked for as labourers did not always keep their word. One Syrian man said that they agree on a daily wage in the morning and say 'we'll pay you when you're done, but at the end of the day they pay you less than you initially agreed. They know you need to work so you will accept this.'

'You can't blackmail a Lebanese farmer in the same way because they are not as desperate – Syrians need to go back to their families with something to eat but Lebanese wait another day to find a job.'

Lebanese farmer, South Akkar IS.

As a result, though Syrian refugees and seasonal workers we met consistently were upset with these interactions and felt they were unfair, as discussed in section 8 (security), no Syrians we met had ever reported this to the authorities. Syrians we met who had experienced this type of incident commonly said that their only response was to stop dealing with the individual. We did not come across any instance in which either a Syrian or a Lebanese person said they had reacted in a way that had escalated the situation.

While we observed that though relations between LTI Syrians and Lebanese in North Christian town were much deeper than in other places, they were also characterised by a level of dependence and control. As outsiders, LTI Syrians depended on their own relationships with Lebanese for their jobs and sponsorships, along with other aspects that they considered key to further integration in Lebanon, such as enrolling their children in morning school shifts.

5

Basic Services

This section discusses basic services that were prioritised as most important by the Syrian and Lebanese families we lived with. Of all potential public services, both Syrian and Lebanese families focused most on health, followed by education and waste management, and rarely discussed other services as priorities.

Table 5: Wave IV RPS findings, pressure on services*

% of respondents who agree that "Presence of Syrian refugees is placing too much strain on Lebanon's resources"		
Location closest to	Syrian	Lebanese
Bekaa Valley IS	76%	97%
North Christian town	82%	100%
South Akkar IS	58%	95%
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	64%	95%

*Wave IV survey findings. (2019). UNDP & RPS Interactive Dashboard. Host-Community and Syrian Refugee Communal Relations in Lebanon.

Available at <http://bit.ly/ark-communalrelations>

Of our study locations, government health services and other public institutions were least present in South Akkar IS. As a result, many Syrians sought medical care from private local pharmacies. Lebanese here said they went to the same pharmacies and also visited public hospitals in the closest major city. This may explain why fewer Syrians here in particular felt that their presence strained Lebanese resources, as most did not use many in the first place. However, as discussed in this section, though Lebanese in particular were worried about the quality of health, education, and garbage removal services, they did not always attribute this to the presence of Syrians in their communities.

When discussing basic services, healthcare was the most common topic of discussion for both Syrian and Lebanese families. In most study locations we observed that Syrians and Lebanese tend to seek out care from similar providers. This is illustrated in table 6.

Though Bekaa Valley IS was far from a hospital, there was a large number of pharmacies located in the streets around the IS and on the nearby main road. Here, both Syrians and Lebanese told us that they prefer to go to pharmacies and local clinics because they were both closer and cheaper than public hospitals. One Syrian family we lived with said that they had taken their baby to a private local clinic and paid US\$ 40 for a check-up and treatment, which they considered to be reasonable. Lebanese families we lived with trusted these pharmacies and said they had been going to them for many decades.

Similarly, in South Akkar IS we observed that there were also many pharmacies located throughout the settlement and on the edges of the IS, sometimes as close as ten meters apart. Syrians preferred these pharmacies to the local hospital, as they told us that the quality of care in the hospital was very poor. While Lebanese people we met here agreed that the hospital was only good for treating minor issues, they said that they preferred to seek help from hospitals based in a nearby large city. Syrians here told us that they did not feel they had the same option, as travelling to this city required passing through check points, which Syrians said they were reluctant to do.

In North Christian, town though some LTI Syrians said they had visited the closest public hospital in the nearest large city, most said that they preferred instead to go to Beirut as the public hospitals there were cheaper, even when including the cost of transport. However, as with Syrians in South Akkar IS, one undocumented Syrian family we lived with here also told us that they had difficulties travelling that far as they had to cross check points, so instead they went to local clinics. While there were no NGO-run clinics in North Christian town, some Syrian families we lived with told us that they had once received WhatsApp messages about a one-day health camp run by an international NGO, though this had not happened since and they had not attended.

Syrians and Lebanese in Mt. Lebanon coastal village said they preferred to go to local clinics for health care. In case of more serious issues, they said they would go to the public hospital in nearby large town, though Syrians noted that this was sometimes difficult for them to reach, as they had to pass through multiple checkpoints.

Table 6: Health facilities available

	Options	Distance	Comments	Support for Syrians
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	Public hospital with children's clinic	35-40 min drive	Good quality but considered too far to travel.	Subsidised for Syrians
	Public hospital in nearest large city	20 min drive	Syrians and Lebanese prefer this for major issues.	Subsidised for Syrians
	Local Lebanese doctor	5 min walk	Syrians and Lebanese prefer this for minor issues.	Pay out of pocket
South Akkar IS	Public hospital (local)	15 min drive	Lebanese and Syrians agreed this is only suitable for minor issues, otherwise, both were concerned about the quality; said that if you go there 'you don't get out alive or you come back with new conditions'.	Subsidised for Syrians
	Public hospital in nearest large city		Syrian refugees reluctant to go here as they have to pass checkpoints; Lebanese prefer this for major issues.	Subsidised for Syrians
	Local private pharmacies	Walking	Lebanese and Syrians prefer to go here for basic issues.	Pay out of pocket
North Christian town	Private clinics and pharmacies	Walking distance	Lebanese and Syrians prefer to go here as it's close by; Lebanese have trusted relationships with providers.	Pay out of pocket
	Public hospital in nearest major city	45min drive	LTI Syrians and some Lebanese say this is expensive so they prefer to go to Beirut instead as PH there are cheaper. Some richer Lebanese prefer this.	Subsidised for Syrians but still more expensive than other providers
	NGO health camp	Walking distance	Happens rarely, only directed at Syrians.	Free for Syrians
Bekaa Valley IS	Public hospital	30 min drive	Syrians don't feel welcome, also consider this too expensive even with UN subsidy; Lebanese prefer to go here.	Subsidised for Syrians
	NGO-run clinics near the ITS	Walking distance	For Syrians only, preferred for maternity care.	Free for Syrians
	Private pharmacies	Walking distance	Preferred by all Syrian and Lebanese based on close proximity and low cost.	Pay out of pocket

Health benefits

The majority of Syrian families we lived with received subsidised or free healthcare at public hospitals, which they said was funded by the 'UN.' These along with other benefits are outlined in table 7 below.

As illustrated above, in theory UN subsidises between 25% to 75% of original cost of care at public hospitals for Syrians. Most Syrians we spoke to were aware that these benefits were available and considered them valuable. However, as mentioned above, Syrians we lived with said reaching the public hospitals where these benefits were provided was often challenging, as they often

needed to pass through multiple checkpoints. As a result, Syrians in all study locations told us that they often opted instead to go to local clinics or pharmacies, where they were required to pay.

Though Syrians in most study locations spoke positively about the subsidised treatment they received, Bekaa Valley IS was an exception. There, Syrians we met told us that though they were meant to receive subsidised treatment from the public hospital, this was not always the case. Syrian families here said that the hospital there often refused to treat them, saying that 'we don't treat this case' or 'this is not our specialty.' They

Table 7: Benefits to Syrians

Study Location	Benefits to Syrians
Bekaa Valley IS	75% of cost covered at local public hospital Medical coupons/vouchers Free medicine (blood pressure, other ailments) even if not needed.
North Christian town	40% of costs covered for maternity care at public hospital.
South Akkar IS	25% of costs covered for maternity care at public hospital, more for a C-section 60% of medicine costs, but does not always come.
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	100% costs covered for dialysis, more for a C-section Disability coverage Dialysis.

said that the UN is supposed to cover 75% of the cost of treatment there, however, the *'prices are hiked when covered by the umum.'* One family said that this meant they often needed to pay around US\$ 800 for treatment, which is *'higher than normal'*. As a result, many Syrian families said they generally went to local clinics and pharmacies instead of the public hospital. One family said that the clinics gave good services and charged US\$10 for an x-ray, compared to US\$60 at the hospital. Another Syrian family we lived with said that they go to the public hospital in Zahle because they do not feel welcome in the public hospital closest to Bekaa Valley IS.

In all study locations, both Syrians and Lebanese people told us that their biggest concern was the cost of health care. Though Syrians in all study locations said that they offset the cost of treatment with UN subsidies, or seeking help from a cheaper local provider, Lebanese people we met said they had fewer options for addressing these costs. Some Lebanese people we met, generally employed as teachers or in other public sector jobs, had government health insurance, but said that this covered a limited proportion of costs incurred for treatment or medicine. Though Lebanese in all study locations were concerned about these costs, we observed that poor Lebanese in Bekaa Valley IS were particularly concerned. Home visits

here were particularly expensive here, with one family citing as much as US\$ 300 for a doctor to visit their ill grandmother.

Lebanese people in all study locations were particularly jealous of the health benefits that they believed Syrians received. Lebanese people said, they did not receive any such benefits and often complained that Syrians can *'go to the hospital for free.'* When discussing the health benefits that Syrians receive, Lebanese people we met often framed these as not only unfair, but as robbing them of the possibility to access additional care or support. One Lebanese family in Bekaa Valley IS explained that Syrians can go to clinics for US\$ 4-6. However, when their (Lebanese) relatives needed surgery for their daughter with muscular dystrophy, there was no assistance available. The mother of the girl said, *'if we were Syrians we would get help.'* Another Lebanese woman here told us that she has two children with medical problems, and struggles to afford their check-ups as she is *'poor.'* She told us that *'no one is helping me because all the funds are going to Syrians.'* A Lebanese family in North Christian town was also concerned about this, complaining that *'Syrians can go to hospital for free.'* Despite these concerns, Lebanese also did not mention that they used to receive support that has now ended following the arrival of the Syrian refugees.

Though many Lebanese people we interacted with believed that Syrians also received subsidised and free medicine, in reality, Syrian refugees we met were very concerned about the cost of medicine.

Syrians living in the IS in South Akkar IS were particularly worried about this, as many said they needed a variety of chronic ailments, which they purchased from the local pharmacy without a prescription. One Syrian family of six we lived with here told us they spend approximately US\$ 200 a month on medicine, while another with a disabled child said they spent as much as US\$ 400. Though they said that the UN covered 60% of this cost, they did not always receive this, though they did not know why. Syrian seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village also shared similar concerns.

We observed that Lebanese families were more concerned with perceived inequality related to healthcare than *'pressure'* by Syrian families on hospitals and other health services. In discussions about health, Lebanese families rarely mentioned that Syrians were putting pressure on the health system or crowding facilities. Instead, Lebanese

families consistently said they would like to have the same support to access health care as they believed Syrians were receiving, and felt that the benefits they believed Syrians received put them at a disadvantage.

Though Lebanese in all study locations often complained about the quality of public healthcare, they tended to blame this on the Lebanese government rather than the presence of Syrians. We observed that these complaints were particularly strong in South Akkar IS, where Lebanese people commonly said they felt ignored by the government.

Schools

Lebanese and LTI Syrian families we lived with in North Christian town were concerned about the quality of their children's education and took steps to ensure they received the best. However, among Syrian refugee families education was not a priority in all study locations. When discussing education, most Syrian refugees did not appear to connect education to future job prospects or earnings for their children, and focused instead on day-to-day concerns. Based on these discussions, we observed that refugees largely viewed attending school as a way for their children to pass time.

Across study locations, all Lebanese families we lived with, all but two Syrian families said they sent their children under 15 to school. Table 8 below shows school preferences by study location.

As mentioned earlier, since Syrians began coming to Lebanon in large numbers, Lebanese public schools introduced a second 'shift,' which allowed them to accommodate Syrian children in entirely separate afternoon classes. Lebanese and Syrians across all study locations commonly talked about these two 'shifts', and explained that they differed in a number of ways. Lebanese shifts have fewer children; hence smaller class sizes while Syrian shifts have much larger class sizes. For example, a Syrian mother in North Christian town told us, the morning shift has 30 students per class while the afternoon shift may have 50 students or more. One researcher in North Christian town met a teacher that offers private tutoring lessons in the evenings because some people send their children for extra classes to compensate for poor teaching in public schools. Often times, both shifts are being taught by the same teachers, which people shared with us meant that teaching quality for the Syrian shift suffers significantly.

Table 8: Education preferences

Study Location	Syrian	Lebanese
Bekaa Valley IS	<p>Afternoon shift at the local public school (10 mins drive) as it's cheaper, and books and supplies are provided by UNICEF and other NGOs.</p> <p>Some Syrians send their children to language courses and vocational training courses organised by NGOs (some hoping for them to find work with NGOs).</p>	Morning shift at the local public school and private school if able to afford.
North Christian town	<p>OT Syrians go to the morning shift in public school (10 mins walk) after negotiation with principal; some opt for private schools as those are better quality ensures integration, cost estimated between US\$ 3000 to US\$ 4000/year.</p> <p>Newer arrivals and refugees go to afternoon shift in public school</p>	Morning shift at the local public school and private school if able to afford.
South Akkar IS	<p>Public local elementary school nearby –closest one is 20 mins away by bus.</p> <p>Many stopped sending their children to school due to cost of school bus which had been previously underwritten by the UN.</p>	Morning shift in public school.
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	<p>Public school (10-20 mins drive).</p> <p>One family sends their children to a 'learning center' where children 'mostly play' (15 mins by bus).</p>	<p>Some go to public school in the community (\$ 17/child/month for school bus) about 10 mins drive away.</p> <p>Some (that can afford to) to private school that is about 30-40 mins drive away.</p>

Syrians in all study locations who attended public school attended the afternoon shifts, except LTI Syrian families in North Christian town. Here, these parents told us that they had used connections with principals and other officials to ensure their children could attend the morning shift with Lebanese children. Most of these LTI Syrian children were born in Lebanon, and their parents consider themselves to be somewhat integrated. These parents told us that they felt strongly about their children attending the morning shift because the quality of education is better. They also told us that teachers punish students in the afternoon shifts more harshly than in the morning. To them, their children attending school with Lebanese and speaking French was symbolic of being equal with the Lebanese.

One LTI Syrian father in North Christian town, who had not attended school himself, said that he opted to send his eight year old son to private school after he was unable to get him into the morning shift. He said he *'knows about the poor teaching in the government school and the conditions of afternoon shifts.'* He said that because of this, he decided to pay more to give him a *'good education'* and ensure he is *'treated equal to Lebanese boys.'* He told us that he also registered his son in a local football club to ensure he had regular interactions with Lebanese children, and explained that he thought this would translate to a better future for his son.

We observed that Syrian refugees in North Christian town were also concerned about the quality of the afternoon shifts. One woman who had recently arrived said that she wanted her children to move from the afternoon to morning shift because she

did not *'want them to mix with the kind of kids in the afternoon sessions'*. Another educated married refugee woman from Homs said that she does not want to have children at all because she is not happy about the education here.

Access

In discussions about education, Syrian refugee and seasonal worker families that we lived with often focused on the costs associated with sending their children to school. Though in most cases people told us that public schools were either free or that their costs were covered by the UN, Syrian families commonly explained that the cost of transport, which ranged from US\$ 13 to US\$ 18/month, still made attending school an expensive prospect.

For example, in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, one seasonal worker family told us that they opted to send their children to a local *'learning center'* because the bus to the public school 20 minutes away was too expensive (US\$ 18/month) while the learning centre provided free transportation and education for Syrians. This learning center is run by the UN for Syrian children and provides course taught by Lebanese and European teachers. Another family here told us that they could not send their children to school because the Syrian class in the public school was full and transport to the nearest alternative school was too expensive as it was a 35 mins drive away. In Bekaa Valley IS, schools were within walking distance or a short bus ride away. No one mentioned any transport related costs here.

In South Akkar IS, refugees said that school bus costs US\$ 13-15 per month per child. Refugees living in an adjacent camp that we met explained that in the past, everyone's children used to attend school when the UN paid for the cost of the bus. However, they told us that since this funding ended, all families in the camp stopped sending their children to school. While transport to school was one of the most important considerations for Syrian parents to send their children to school, transport related costs were never mentioned by Lebanese in any of the study locations.

In all study locations, we found that Lebanese families have to pay for public schools (approximately US\$ 150 per year per child) while for Syrians it is free. In our discussions, families also mentioned other costs that may differ for Syrian and Lebanese families. In Bekaa Valley IS, one Lebanese family mentioned that the Lebanese children have to wear uniform to school while



Syrian children drawing in Mt. Lebanon.

Syrians do not. Another family in Bekaa Valley IS confirmed that they do in fact receive free books and stationary.

In addition to concern about quality, Syrians we met in a number of study locations also told us about other challenges associated with attending school. We met one LTI Syrian family in North Christian town who were not able to enrol their child in school because they never sought birth registration papers for which they would have had to travel to Beirut which they considered expensive.

Another refugee family in Bekaa Valley IS said that many refugee children stop attending school once they complete middle school, as most high schools do not have an afternoon shift and they have no other affordable options. One refugee family here told us that their children stopped going to school after their arrival in Lebanon because they were not enrolled in the grade corresponding to their age and the grade they were enrolled in back in Syria. In Syria, they attended grade 6, however, in Lebanon they were told to join grade 2. With no opportunities for remedial education, the parents said they decided to opt for vocational training and English language courses offered by NGOs instead.

Tension over education

Both Lebanese and Syrians who had been living in Lebanon for a number of years expressed concerns about the strain refugees placed on the education system. As many teachers taught both the morning and afternoon shifts, parents complained that the quality of teaching in the morning had suffered from the additional work associated with the afternoon shift. Lebanese parents in Bekaa Valley IS we lived with were particularly resentful of this

burden placed on teachers, as they also explained that the Syrian classes were undisciplined and challenging for Lebanese teachers to teach.

One Lebanese family here also mentioned instances of discrimination by school management between the two shifts. This family said that the UNHCR provides books to public schools since 2016 which are meant for both Lebanese and Syrian children. However, she shared that the principal only hands out the supplies in the evening shift since there is a higher probability of UN monitoring at that time, and the books meant for the morning shift are sold to libraries and bookshops instead. The Lebanese family we spoke to expressed resentment at the fact that despite paying for the both the school and books (around US\$ 150/year), the resources meant for them are directed elsewhere. Other Lebanese families complained that Syrian children in some schools do not have to wear uniforms while Lebanese do. This gave the impression that Syrian students were undisciplined and separated the two groups even further.

Though Lebanese were the most concerned about this, one Syrian seasonal worker who had been living permanently in Mt. Lebanon coastal village since 2009 was complained that education had deteriorated in the years he had been in Lebanon. He said, *'now the kids go to school only to play,'* implying that there is limited learning taking place in schools following the addition of the afternoon shift.

Garbage Disposal

Syrians across all study locations almost never complained about the state of cleanliness of their environment, garbage or waste service. While some Lebanese told us that garbage and waste were a concern for them, we observed that this issue was less important to them than either health or education.

The strongest complaints we heard came from Lebanese living in close proximity to IS in Bekaa Valley IS, where there was poor garbage disposal and flooding resulting from poor drainage systems and heavy rains. These issues were a concern for both Syrian and Lebanese residents. Here, we observed that there was no landfill or central garbage collection point, leaving garbage on the streets and clogging the water canals that ran through the neighborhood. One Lebanese father we lived with who often blamed Syrians for all the community ills said, *'look at what they are doing to us'* but another Lebanese father we lived with

RPS Findings

RPS studies find that Lebanese see high demand for and limited supply of utilities and services as tension point more than Syrians (p29). We observed that affordability rather than pressure was the main concern related to healthcare (with competition a minor factor). However, this finding does appear to be valid related to education, as pressure on schools resulting from refugees emerged as a significant concern for Lebanese.



contradicted such views suggesting these were general waste disposal issues and not related to IS. Refugees living in the nearby IS said that they paid US\$ 3.30/tent/month for garbage to be removed from a central dumping point. Nobody living in the camp complained about cleanliness or garbage. However, in South Akkar IS, where refugees lived in a large IS, Lebanese families we lived with whose homes were next to the IS did not complain about garbage or cleanliness of the area. Here, we observed that Syrian families were very conscientious of garbage disposal and often walked to central dumping points to dispose off garbage in designated spots. We observed that there was very little garbage on the streets or surrounding the IS and that the IS and facilities within it, including the shared bathroom areas, were really clean. In both South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS Syrian refugees also burned their waste as heating fuel.

Lebanese living in study locations without an IS did not commonly complain about garbage and waste. Lebanese families we lived with in North Christian town said that the municipality collects garbage, for which they pay annually, and that the streets of the town itself are clean. Lebanese in outlying areas said that private companies come to collect garbage, or they burn their trash. Lebanese here also told us that Syrians living on the edge of town also often burn their garbage and sometimes use it as fuel. We observed that there was considerable garbage in one neighbourhood where houses were rented to Syrians and the municipality did not collect garbage. The nearby IS was very clean. Though most Lebanese families that we met did not complain about this, one struggling Lebanese family we lived with said *'if the Government of Lebanon sends Syrians back, the neighbourhood will be less crowded, smell better and have less garbage.'*

In Mt. Lebanon coastal village, we observed that the town was clean with very little garbage visible. Some Lebanese people we lived with commented that they wanted Syrians to *'stop throwing garbage on the land.'* However, this did not appear to be a significant source of tension or resentment.

Though in some instances, Lebanese attributed weaknesses in service delivery to the presence of Syrians, however in many cases we observed that Lebanese also commonly attributed these to inefficiencies in the municipality itself. This was particularly true for Lebanese living in

South Akkar IS and Mt. Lebanon coastal village, who were vociferous about this dissatisfaction, which they attributed to internal inefficiencies and neglect rather than any extra burden posed by Syrian refugees and seasonal workers. Though Mt. Lebanon coastal village had a small concentration of Syrians and South Akkar IS had a large concentration, these complaints were largely directed at the municipality. A number of Lebanese in South Akkar IS specifically described the municipal government there as *'absent.'* When discussing the fact that most people living in the area use electricity without paying for it, one Lebanese father we lived with told us that *'we can do this here because there is no government.'* A Lebanese taxi driver gave a similar response when discussing reasons for most taxis here having white number plates rather than the official red number plates saying that people here do not bother to apply for these plates because *'there is no government here.'*

Syrian refugees and seasonal workers also often complained about the services provided by the municipality in their study locations. In these conversations, Syrians commonly contrasted the public services in Lebanon with those available in Syria before they war. One Syrian woman living in Mt. Lebanon coastal village said there were *'better and cheaper hospitals and schools in Syria than here.'* This view of life in Syria framed Syrian's views on public service delivery and accessibility, and likely informed their assessments of the quality of Lebanese public services in general.

6 Aid

This section reviews people's experiences of and views on aid that is intended to support Syrians living in Lebanon.

Table 9: RPS data, unfair aid distribution

% of respondents who identify 'unfair aid distribution' as a 'main source of tension in their community

Location nearest to	Syrian	Lebanese
Bekaa Valley IS	5%	8%
North Christian town	14%	1%
South Akkar IS	4%	3%
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	0%	4%

*Wave IV survey findings. (2019). UNDP & RPS Interactive Dashboard. Host-Community and Syrian Refugee Communal Relations in Lebanon.

Available at <http://bit.ly/ark-communalrelations>

We observed that both Syrians and Lebanese respondents considered 'unfair aid distribution' to be a driver of social tensions. This is consistent with a number of RPS measures, and impacts relations between Syrians and Lebanese as well as among Syrians.

However, when examined by study location, our study findings reinforce RPS findings, showing the highest proportion of Lebanese in Bekaa Valley IS as identifying aid as a driver of tension in any study location. Here, we found Lebanese to be particularly resentful of the aid that Syrians receive, both in terms of equity as well as how they believe they use it. Similarly, we also identified that LTI Syrians in North Christian town were resentful of aid received by other Syrians who had come more recently, which may explain this relatively high proportion. Though we observed that Syrians in other study locations were jealous of the aid provided to other Syrians, these individuals were often defined as part of other communities, which may explain why higher proportions of Syrians did not identify this as a source of tension within their own community.

Forms of aid

Unsurprisingly we observed that programmes and NGOs that intended to support Syrians were primarily present in Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS, where the majority of Syrians were refugees living in IS. In Bekaa we observed at least 18 NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies and 11 in South Akkar IS. We also observed five organisations and agencies present in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, some of whom were run by local Muslim groups. There were no active organisations in North Christian town. Where NGOs were present we observed signs and relief items donated by these organisations; Syrian refugees and seasonal workers themselves did not often distinguish between these organisations, nor did they commonly refer to them by name.

In most cases, NGOs provided trash bins and waste removal services, and served as disbursement points for other forms of aid (described below). In Bekaa Valley IS, these organisations also offered a number of trainings designed to improve 'awareness' or 'skills development.' One refugee family we lived with here showed us 40 certificates they had received from various organisations all from courses designed to build skills that might improve employability prospects. However, the family said that though these sessions had been a useful way to pass the time, they had not resulted in employment or increased income. In South Akkar IS, Syrian refugees we lived with also complained about 'pointless' and 'meaningless' awareness raising sessions that 'had no benefit to us.' As a result, they said, 'we lost trust in the UN and other organisations.'

Despite the widespread confusion related to residency, we observed that there was only one NGO near Bekaa Valley IS offering legal advice or advice on how to navigate aid, and none in other study locations. Few Syrian refugees here mentioned this service and Syrians in other study locations said that there was nowhere to go for help for such issues.

Just as we only observed programs intended to support refugees in three of the four study locations, we also only met Syrians who received some form of aid in these three study locations as well. All Syrians and Lebanese we interacted with described all aid as coming from the 'umum' and did not distinguish between specific organisations.

Syrian refugees across study locations told us that aid primarily took the form of UN sponsored food

vouchers (US\$ 27/family member/month) and a card loaded with cash assistance (US\$ 173/family/month) Most refugees said they would prefer to receive the US\$ 27 in cash rather than vouchers, as this could cover expenses beyond food and allowed them choice. One father we lived with in South Akkar IS told us that the requirement to use the vouchers in the supermarket resulted in spending more on food as he could have *'bought from someone I know for LBP 1000 (whereas it is) for LBP 3000 from the supermarket.'* In all study locations, we observed that families that did receive these forms of aid spent this money in Lebanese-owned supermarkets and other Lebanese-owned shops in their local communities and neighbourhoods, as very few Syrians owned such shops (see section 7 on competition for work).

Other forms of aid that people received varied by family and location, aside from North Christian town where no LTI Syrian or Syrian refugees said they received anything. These included blankets, tarpaulins and clothing from the UN and NGOs, along with household goods and food donations made through mosques and individual families.

Syrian experiences of aid

Though many Syrian families across all study locations except North Christian town told us about these various forms of aid, relatively few continue to receive it. This was the case in Bekaa Valley IS, where the families we lived with and many others said that they stopped receiving the US\$ 27 benefit around October 2018, *'at the start of winter.'* One refugee family we spoke to here said that these vouchers amounted to US\$ 300

per month, which made things *'much better then'* as compared to now. Another refugee family in Bekaa Valley IS said that the *'umum had suddenly cut 50,000 families'* from aid across the country. Syrian families in South Akkar IS and Mt. Lebanon coastal village shared similar experiences, saying the aid had been cut between one and a half and three years ago. Though this family said that as a result of these cuts they need to work longer hours, Syrians did not commonly link these cuts to seeking out more work, potentially because this work was not available (see section 7 on competition for work). Rather, they said they reduced their household expenses and took on additional debt to cover emergencies if no work was available.

Syrians and Lebanese living in all study locations except North Christian town told us many different reasons why they believed the cuts had been made, along with the scale of the cuts. Though most people said they did not know why the cuts had happened, one Syrian refugee family in South Akkar IS guessed that it was because they were only a family of four. One middle-class Lebanese father that we lived with in South Akkar IS told us that Syrian families with fewer than four members had been cut from aid, saying *'a family of four is now a family of eight and is well off.'* He criticised this approach to cutting as he felt it encouraged Syrians to have larger families, which many other Lebanese in Bekaa Valley IS and in other study locations were also concerned about.

Syrians in South Akkar IS in particular complained that many assessments had been carried out in their communities in recent years, but this did not correspond to aid coming to the community.

RPS Findings

Higher levels of cash assistance was associated with lower levels of all the negative outcomes examined. It is likely that greater cash assistance provided to Syrian refugees positively affected Lebanese, as well, alleviating pressure on the local economy by helping to address, for example, greater competition over lower-skilled jobs, and through the injection of cash into the local economy, with Syrian refugees utilising the cash assistance to purchase goods and services from local Lebanese businesses (RPS wave IV report, p.42).



'NGOs give us a headache from all of the assessments... we expect them to help us and to give us aid but this never happens.'

Syrian refugee family, South Akkar IS.

Another refugee family we lived with here shared that people from the UN and NGOs *'come and take a lot information, tell us that they're coming back with help but they never come back.'* An elderly Syrian refugee woman here told us that when organisations come to gather information they use her tent for discussions, but nothing comes to her in return, said *'they said they like me and they do everything in my tent, but no one asks about the lonely old woman.'* Though refugees in Bekaa Valley IS did not complain about these assessments, seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village did, saying that outsiders came for assessments but *'did not come back'* with aid.

Though some Syrian refugees viewed aid allocation as arbitrary, most had a sense that allocations were based on family income, assets, or their overall wealth. Most Syrian refugees we met in all study locations said they wished they received more aid, and in some cases appeared to play down their assets to us in order to appear less well off. For example, in Mt. Lebanon coastal village a number of Syrian host families would go out of their way to point out to researchers that they had not bought a washing machine, electronics, or other assets of value in their homes, saying that they had been purchased by relatives living abroad. Similarly, one Syrian woman here said that she *'hid the blankets and cleaning supplies'* when the UN visited, as she was afraid the UN would cut her aid, even though she no longer receives cash or vouchers. This did not occur in other study locations; in North Christian town because Syrians were not accustomed to assessment or receiving aid and in South Akkar IS because families had a relatively small number of possessions in their tents or other dwellings.

Syrian refugees and seasonal workers told us that there were very few ways for them to follow up with the UN about their aid or to advocate for themselves when they felt they deserved more. Most of these families across study locations said that the only option was to contact the UN by phone. Syrian refugees in Bekaa Valley IS said many people had phoned numerous times, including one woman who left 51 messages complaining about her cuts in aid. She and others here explained that many of these calls were not answered, and for others she was told that *'we are investigating your case.'* Refugees here contrasted this with the INGO that administers their camp, who they said *'answers their phones and provides information.'* A Syrian seasonal worker we met in

Mt. Lebanon coastal village also said the same thing about the UN, explaining that she tries to call *'but there is no answer.'*

However, unlike in the other study locations, a number of refugees we met in the IS in South Akkar IS had visited the UN office in Tripoli to complain about the cut in their aid. One grandmother here explained that *'there are a lot of families who still receive this [aid], so why shouldn't we?'* Though she had visited the office multiple times to complain about the loss of the US\$ 173/month, she had received no follow up as promised. As the family of six people made less than US\$ 13/day from agricultural labour, she said that they were struggling without this benefit. Another family we lived with here also went to a nearby large town to complain to the UN about the cut in aid, and were told that their *'file was under processing.'*

Beyond calling and visiting an office, some Syrian refugees in Bekaa Valley IS and seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village said that paying extra money to the UN helps ensure their applications are processed faster. In Bekaa, one male Syrian refugee explained that there were *'networks to get things like this done.'* Though a number of Syrians in Mt. Lebanon coastal village also commented on these dynamics, no family we met mentioned having paid additional money themselves to speed up the aid distribution process.

As Syrians across study locations were concerned about future cuts, they also shared ways that they also tailor the information they shared to try to improve their chances of receiving or keeping aid. One LTI Syrian father we stayed with in North Christian town explained that his daughters in law all claim to be unmarried in order to increase their chance of gaining refugee status with the UN. They had previously been supported for residency by the grandfather, who abandoned the family and left them without another way to obtain legal documents. We observed that this family was initially concerned and assumed that our researcher was actually a UN employee there to confirm the family's situation, as there were rumours of students doing this in other instances.

A number of Syrian families in Mt. Lebanon coastal village also had a similar concern, as they initially thought our researchers worked for the UN and were in the community to *'take away their aid.'* There, one Syrian family told us that they do not always tell the truth to the UN when they come.

In Bekaa Valley IS, both Lebanese and Syrian families also said they suspected corruption with the aid distribution system. One middle-class Lebanese family here said that *'NGOs bring aid and take photos and take the aid away again.'* One Syrian man here told us that he knew of NGO staff here who did not deliver what they are meant to, and sometimes came in the night and took the aid materials away in his car. Other Syrian families here also made similar comments.

Others' views of aid

Aid was a common point of discussion among both Syrians and Lebanese families in all study locations. The exception was North Christian town, where Lebanese discussed this topic more often than the LTI and new arrival Syrians we lived with.

We observed that most Lebanese and Syrians across study locations believe that Syrians are receiving aid, especially UN cash/vouchers in larger numbers and in greater quantities than what we actually observed in our four study locations. There is clearly a disconnect between perception and reality. This belief led both Lebanese and Syrians to feel jealous of those Syrians who they felt received aid that they *'did not deserve.'* Overall poor and struggling Lebanese commonly felt neglected by the aid process. Though Syrians largely complained about these assessments, some poor and struggling Lebanese in many study locations said that they wished that people also made visits to their homes, though poor Lebanese in South Akkar IS in particular did not appear jealous of aid provided to Syrians and *'satisfied'* with what they had.

'People came to speak to Syrians but no one came and asked us anything because we are Lebanese.'

Lebanese shop owner, Mt. Lebanon coastal village.

Lebanese people near Bekaa Valley IS most strongly resented aid provided to Syrians. Families in one middle-class Lebanese community living nearby commonly complained that *'Syrians were getting vouchers.'* One Lebanese woman here said Syrians are *'eating for free, living better than they did in Syria,'* which was a sentiment we heard many others in this community echo. Another Lebanese man here contrasted this with the support provided to Lebanese by the government, saying, *'do you know how much they get and what gets to us? We don't even get 1%.'* Lebanese small business owners in Mt. Lebanon coastal village also explained that they thought Syrians deserved only in certain cases, saying *'It is ok for Syrians to get aid but not if they came before the war'*.

In Bekaa Valley IS, we also heard middle-class Lebanese criticise how they believed Syrians used the aid they received. The Lebanese sister of one host household who is a teacher to Syrian children in the public school said that she was *'ok with the Syrians at first'* but they *'go sell the clothes we give them, the food we give, instead of protecting kids they send them to the street to beg but have the means to give them a dignified life -they steal from shops. They have everything and still are not civilised.'* She added that *'Syrians get paid for school transportation -but put the money in their pockets and squeeze 10 kids in one car and put them in danger. Isn't that sick?'* However, one middle-class Lebanese man we lived with here who was married to a Syrian woman told us that he did not have a problem if Syrians are selling the coupons they receive, as *'they have a right to live so this is understandable.'* Though he too complained that *'all aid is given to Syrians; they get help with everything,'* he also said that he felt sorry for the Syrians living in the IS. In discussions with Syrians here and in other study locations, we did not observe or hear about anyone selling coupons, despite the limitations they sometimes have.

We observed that these perceptions and views on the aid allocation process also contributed to jealousies within the Syrian community and those who did and did not deserve it. In Bekaa Valley IS, many Syrian refugees told us that *'Syrians are taking aid from those who need it.'* Similarly, we noticed jealousies in Mt. Lebanon coastal village among Syrian seasonal workers, with some families commenting that some families receive aid who *'don't deserve it.'* Here and in Bekaa

Valley IS, Syrians living in rented houses believed that they received less aid because they *'live in a house,'* rather than a tent. One Syrian seasonal worker family there living in a rented house told us that this should not be the case as *'some living in a tent earn well and will still get help.'* While LTI Syrians in North Christian town, particularly those who were poor and worked in labour and service industries, had similar complaints, saying that they did not receive any support, unlike the refugees.

In South Akkar IS, though we did not observe this same level of resentment among Syrian refugees living in the same IS, families we lived with were very jealous of those in the neighbouring IS. They explained that this camp was *'well serviced'* and that people there *'get a lot of benefits,'* including materials for construction and more people currently receiving the US\$27 benefit. People told us that they think the camp receives this because of *'false measurements'* and said that the people *'who are getting this in the other camp don't need it.'*

7

Competition for Work

Jobs and the economy were one of the most common topics of discussion with Syrians and Lebanese people we met across study locations. Though a full labour market analysis is needed to assess the level of competition throughout the country, this section provides insight into people's views and experiences with these issues.

Lebanese families commonly cited changes in Lebanon's economic and job situation as a source of tension and stress and were quick to attribute this to the recent Syrian arrivals and the perception that they posed new competition for work. This is consistent with RPS findings, which find that 63.3% of Lebanese agreed that competition for low skilled jobs drives tensions between these groups in their communities. A slightly lower proportion of Syrians (52.1%) held this view.

However, our experience indicates that though the perception of competition is real, it does not necessarily play out in reality. The state of the economy, and in particular the moratorium on bank loans has led to a moribund construction industry and minimal investment so that Lebanese self-employed skilled workers and micro-businessmen

were the most vociferous about the downturn in their own incomes. However, this group would not consider working in the jobs occupied by Syrians. There has been a long standing tradition of segregation of work going back generations with Syrian seasonal workers in agriculture and construction typically taking on menial and manual work and, as discussed below, this situation largely continues. Competition for the same work between Lebanese and Syrians was only apparent among poor Lebanese and Syrian refugees in South Akkar IS, the poorest of our study locations and even here most Lebanese agricultural workers owned their own small holdings which they worked on rather than competed for other day labour.

'All my life there have been Syrian farmers.'

Lebanese woman, Mt. Lebanon coastal village.

Some difference was observed in other study locations in that some Syrian refugee families have more recently established small trade businesses, e.g. in clothing, and vegetable selling. However, their customer base is largely Syrian (e.g. Lebanese women in North Christian town were adamant that they would never buy clothes from these vendors as they were not fashionable enough) and is not generally taking pre-crisis trade away from Lebanese. LTI Syrians in Mt. Lebanon coastal village and North Christian town were as likely as Lebanese to complain about Syrian refugees taking work opportunities from others but, like Lebanese, they were often providing services to the refugees and actually gaining economically from their presence. While telling us about the downturn in his second-hand van business since the Syrians arrived, one struggling Lebanese father we lived with in North Christian town said that *'all problems will be solved if Syrians leave.'* Yet his woes were entirely due to the current economic climate of his business.

In a number of study locations, we observed that Syrian refugees and seasonal worker families often depended on one income earner to support the entire family, which often numbered over five members and included other adults of working age. Though in some cases more adults wanted to work, lack of job opportunities and fear of being

caught by the Lebanese police (Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS) limited their opportunities to find work. One Syrian refugee family we lived with in South Akkar IS depended on one son working as a day labourer for an international manufacturing company (earning US\$ 17/day) to support six family members, including another adult son (age 19) with a developmental disability. In Bekaa Valley IS, another family of 10 adults and 14 children depended on the three part-time jobs held by a single daughter in her twenties, earning them about US\$ 600 per month. Another family in Bekaa Valley IS had five sons and an unmarried daughter of working age but only the two eldest sons, who were both married, earned an income (selling vegetables) supporting the entire family of twelve. Like many of the other income earners, they relied on personal networks and recommendations to find work opportunities and this gave legitimacy to the employment. Families shared that they actively reduced risks of illegal working by having one well-networked family member as the main income earner.

Though some Lebanese small business owners and small landowners we lived with also depended on a single income earner, those with adult male children generally drew on the income of these adult males. One poor Lebanese family in more religiously conservative South Akkar IS said that though their financial situation was 'tough,' only the sons and father support the family, and that this was the same for many other Lebanese families in the area. Though we met one poor Lebanese woman in Mt. Lebanon coastal village who did agricultural work, she and the Syrian neighbors both told us that it was unusual for Lebanese women to work in agriculture here. She explained that she had come from another part of Lebanon and was not as well off as the other Lebanese that live in the area. Though poor and struggling, Lebanese families told us they generally also relied on networks to find jobs, we observed that those who owned their own land depended less on these networks.

By contrast, despite religious conservatism observed in Akkar, we observed that it was common for Syrian refugee women to work as well as men in order to 'survive'. For example, in one family we lived with both men and women worked all day planting and at night tending to the soil and crops, sleeping only between 11pm and 3am. In some cases, only women worked as men were concerned that they might be picked up by the

police. One Syrian man told us that the fact that women worked was a last resort, saying '*do you think we would send our daughters to work if we didn't have to?*'

We observed that the complaints about competition for work were the most intense in Bekaa Valley IS, where many poor Lebanese people we met complained that income earning opportunities were better before the Syrians began arriving in large numbers. One Lebanese man with a Syrian wife said that since this time, the '*economic situation has gone downhill,*' and another Lebanese man said that '*work here was better before the crisis in Syria.*' Another Lebanese mother we lived with was more critical saying, '*they [Syrians] haven't left anything for us -nothing is left for us anymore.*' The father in this family also complained that it was not a level playing field for earning from small business as Syrians here are opening businesses but '*don't have to pay for fuel and school as Lebanese do.*'

Though Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS both have a very high Syrian refugee presence and a large IS, poor Lebanese people we met tended to discuss the issue of job competition differently. Speaking of the Syrian new arrivals, one Lebanese man told us that '*they didn't steal our job, it's from God.*'

In Mt. Lebanon coastal village where Syrian traditional seasonal workers had brought their families over and had found work beyond this (e.g in tourist resorts), Lebanese shop owners and small landowners thought Syrians were taking jobs meant for them. One Lebanese woman who owns a shop told us that even though most of her customers are Syrian, '*it is better for Syrians to go back because they are taking jobs, they are taking everything.*' Another Lebanese woman here said that '*Syrians are not leaving any work for Lebanese,*' though she also noted that all members of her family are employed. A number of Lebanese people here also specifically complained that since Syrians began arriving in large numbers, house rents had also risen. Some Syrian seasonal workers living here shared the complaints of the Lebanese. One Syrian man who had been in Lebanon since 2004 told us that he could not get work so easily after the refugees came. Syrian seasonal workers here who had been renting houses prior to 2011 also complained that rent prices had increased now that so many more Syrians are looking for places to rent.

LTI Syrians in North Christian town shared that many Syrian refugees had ‘taken jobs’ from LTI Syrians, including many who had helped them find work in the first place. Though they were often sympathetic that these new arrivals ‘needed the money,’ many LTI Syrian men in this position told us that they were now very protective of their jobs as cart sellers, in markets and elsewhere, which had developed over time by building good relationships with the municipality and Lebanese shop owners (see section 4 on relationships).

Though these criticisms by both Lebanese and LTI Syrians centered on competition for work, as noted above, we observed that there were relatively narrow domains in which Syrian refugees and seasonal workers currently compete with Lebanese for jobs. Table 10 below illustrates the most common work for Lebanese and Syrians in each study location, including areas of real competition, by sector.

This competition was largely limited to agricultural labour, construction, skilled labour, and small owner/operated, which were done by poor, newly struggling Lebanese, along with Lebanese farmers. The nature of this competition varied by study location and is discussed in more detail below.

In agriculture across study locations, we observed that Syrian refugees and seasonal workers most commonly worked in manual labour, including agricultural contract labour (Bekaa Valley IS, South Akkar IS) and share cropping (Mt. Lebanon coastal village). As Lebanese small landowners tended to act as managers, overseers, and brokers, we rarely encountered circumstances when Lebanese and Syrians were doing -or wanted to be doing- the same roles. Any competition for agricultural work was between Syrians rather than between Lebanese and Syrians. In Mt. Lebanon coastal village, one Lebanese man working in a bakery told us that ‘most Lebanese people don’t know how to work in agriculture or construction, so we need Syrians to come here to do this work.’ Another Lebanese mother, whose children had gone to Beirut, told us that ‘the younger kids don’t want to work on land’ and prefer to rent it out. One Lebanese neighbour here said that ‘very few Lebanese work in farming. It is always Syrians now’. She added, ‘now there are so many Syrians, all my life there have been Syrian farmers.’

Near Bekaa Valley IS, where individual Lebanese landowners own large plots of land, we observed that they regarded manual work as low status. For example, a Lebanese father we lived with said that,

Table 10: Experience of competition for work

Type of work		Bekaa Valley IS		South Akkar IS		Mt. Lebanon coastal village		North Christian town	
		Syrian	Lebanese	Syrian	Lebanese	Syrian	Lebanese	Syrian	Lebanese
Agriculture	Contract/tenant labour	■	■	competition		■	■	■	■
	Landowners	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Fishing	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Labour	Construction	■	■	competition		■	■	■	■
	Semi-skilled labour	■	■	competition		■	■	competition	
	Unskilled labour	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Business	Small business owners	■	■	■	■	■	■	competition	
	Small business workers, owner/operators	■	■	competition		competition		competition	
	Cart Vendors	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hospitality	Labour (cleaning, food prep)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Management	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Other	NGO workers	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

■ Work common and undertaken by Syrian and Lebanese ■ Work NOT common in the location.

'Syrians have less dignity,' when it comes to work. However, Lebanese people here also commonly shared sentiments such as, 'Lebanese don't work - they are very lazy compared to Syrians - they just rent out to Syrians.' However, we observed that some poorer Lebanese did compete with Syrians for contract labour work as most did not own their own land.

In South Akkar IS, both poor Lebanese and Syrian refugees depended on agriculture for their livelihoods. Here, we observed that land holdings were very small compared to land holdings in Bekaa Valley IS. Many of the Lebanese landowners in South Akkar IS also work on the land themselves and are more directly engaged in day-to-day agricultural work than Lebanese in Mt. Lebanon coastal village and Bekaa Valley IS. Other Lebanese here also work as brokers, arranging for poor Lebanese and Syrian labourers to work on this land. One Lebanese farmer family we lived with told us that they were 'proud' to work only on their land and not as contract labour on others' land. For this reason, many Lebanese here may sense competition from Syrians, but there are also many others who are in control of hiring, and thus may benefit from Syrians working on their land, as they choose to hire Syrians over doing the labour themselves.

RPS Findings

Akkar had the biggest gap between Lebanese perceptions that 'competition for low skilled jobs' is driving tensions (>80%) and proportion of the population who had experienced job loss to a Syrian (10%).



In construction, both Syrians and Lebanese told us that Syrian refugees tended to fill the majority of unskilled labour jobs. Similar to agricultural labour, both Syrian and Lebanese commonly told us that Lebanese were generally not interested in unskilled labour as it 'does not suit them' and will only work as foremen/supervisors where they earn twice as much as unskilled labour. Some competition arises in skilled daily labour including electricians, mechanics and plumbers. For example, one struggling Lebanese father we lived in with Bekaa Valley IS owned a steel cutting business and told us that before the Syrians came, he was the only steel cutter in the area. Now he

was annoyed that 'Syrians are taking customers away.'

The hospitality industry, like agriculture and construction, also demonstrates segmentation of work. While Lebanese and Syrian refugees both worked in restaurants and hospitality, people told us that Lebanese tended to work as managers, front of house and in direct contact with customers, Syrians tended to work as cooks, cleaners or in other support services. As with other forms of labour, Syrian seasonal workers we lived with in Mt. Lebanon coastal village told us that 'Lebanese people don't want to do this job (working in tourist resorts) because it is their own country, it's not prestigious.' Here or in any study location, we did not meet any Lebanese people who cleaned or took up manual labour roles in resorts. In Bekaa Valley IS, we observed that Syrian refugees also commonly did cleaning and preparation work in restaurants. Though people there said that Lebanese and Syrians may work in the same restaurants, they would rarely work in the same roles.

The issue of **unequal wages** for Syrians and Lebanese arose in many discussions across study locations. Lebanese commonly complained that Syrians' willingness to accept lower wages forced them out of work. Though there are legal provisions intended to protect Lebanese workers against this by setting a maximum proportion of Lebanese employees, no one we met referenced these regulations. Lebanese met in one North Christian town neighbourhood where most Syrians rent said that, 'Syrians get jobs because they take low wages' and that employers are 'firing Lebanese and hiring Syrians.' This man said he was speaking mostly of construction, where he said 'Lebanese don't accept US\$ 450/month but a Syrian might accept US\$ 200'. In Bekaa Valley IS, poor Lebanese shared similar views, saying that Syrians get paid approximately US\$ 100/month less than Lebanese for most kinds of labour. In South Akkar IS, Syrian refugees and poor Lebanese both told us that Syrians accept lower pay for manual work. Syrian refugees here told us that they receive US\$ 8/day for agricultural labour compared with US\$ 12/day for Lebanese workers doing the same work. Similarly, in Mt. Lebanon, one Lebanese mother told us that the situation is 'now getting too much.' She said that her son used to work as a minibus driver but had to quit because the daily wage dropped once Syrian new arrivals came (but, like other young Lebanese men from this town, he managed to find work in Beirut).

'Lebanese would never agree to work for the wage that we do.'

Syrian refugee grandmother, South Akkar IS

However, some Syrians refugees framed the wage gap as a reason why many Lebanese are not interested in the jobs they do and rarely cited differences in pay as unfair or a source of tension. Across all study locations, Syrian seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village were the only ones who said there were no pay differentials between them and Lebanese and noted this equality with pride. Only one family we lived with suspected that they might be being paid less, but were not worried as they *'had a good relationship with the boss.'*

All Syrians across study locations told us their employment came with few protections. No Syrian we met in any study location had an employment contract or insurance even in situations when they were working with a legal sponsor and had full residency documentation. This was the same for many poor and struggling Lebanese. Work outside of civil service or 'white collar' work among those we talked with was paid in cash and no one we met said they paid Government taxes. We observed that these informal arrangements combined with sponsorship requirements created opportunities for Syrian workers to be exploited (see section 4 on relationships). One Syrian man we lived with here shared that Lebanese shop owners prefer Syrian workers as they *'can control (them)'* and said *'I work twice as hard as the Lebanese.'* He said if he worked 12 hours, his Lebanese colleagues would work six. Another Syrian family said that they believed that Syrian workers were more efficient as they were *'scared they might lose their jobs.'*

However, Syrian refugees and seasonal workers we met were more concerned with the fact that their work was unpredictable than the wage rate per se. Syrian seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village told us that even when they have work they worry that it *'might disappear'* and that *'you never know when it will go away.'* Although both agricultural and resort work was seasonal and somewhat predictable, there were still uncertainties. One Syrian woman explained the

unreliability of agricultural work, *'the big problem is that jobs can disappear easily, maybe the farmer doesn't need you anymore, maybe it is a season with less harvest.'*

Although voicing concerns about work competition, both real and perceived, across study locations, Lebanese rarely spoke of any economic benefit of the Syrian presence in their communities. As discussed previously, in all study locations, we observed that Syrian refugees bought the vast majority of their goods at Lebanese-owned stores or from Lebanese individuals. The fact that most Syrians cannot own businesses made this the norm in all study locations. In Bekaa Valley IS, a Lebanese bakery owner told us that he now sells 40 packs of bread per day, as compared to ten before the Syrian refugees arrived. Lebanese in other study locations told us about other advantages that the Syrians brought to their communities, including in Mt. Lebanon coastal village where many Lebanese shop owners we met explained that without Syrian seasonal workers, there would be a labour shortage locally as most young Lebanese workers had moved to Beirut.

In North Christian town, a number of LTI Syrians we met owned businesses more or less 'independently' from Lebanese. One family we lived with operated a phone shop, with a Lebanese owner who was only involved *'for legal reasons.'*

RPS Findings

Over all four waves, for both Lebanese and Syrians, 'competition over lower skilled jobs' remained the most-cited perceived causes of tensions, (60.1%) (RPS wave IV, p.29)



8 Safety and Security

In all study locations, both Syrians and Lebanese described their communities as 'safe.' We rarely observed any Lebanese police presence, nor the presence of other state security forces and none of the study locations had curfews. Lebanese, particularly Christian areas, considered a 'safe' community to be one where 'outsiders' are monitored and restricted. Sunni Lebanese living in South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS who were less well-off focused on physical aspects of safety, noting that their communities were safe because they could move freely '*without interruption.*'

When discussing security, Syrians in all study locations often referenced the fact that they lived among family or people from their own communities in Syria, and for that reason felt 'safe.' They often contrasted the security situation in Lebanon with Syria, where they had left following bombings, occupation by OAG, and other forms of terror and violence. This recent memory may have reframed their sense of safety, as all were clear there was no imminent threat posed to them while in Lebanon. Across study locations, we did not hear Lebanese families contrasting the current situation with any other time in Lebanon's recent history.

Table 11: Wave IV RPS findings, safety*

% respondents who rate their neighbourhood as 'safe' in the day and night:

Nearest location to	Lebanese		Syrian	
	Day	Night	Day	Night
Bekka Valley IS	93%	75%	98%	85%
North Christian town	99%	95%	100%	96%
South Akkar IS	99%	98%	90%	85%
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	96%	91%	97%	90%

*Wave IV survey findings. (2019). UNDP & RPS Interactive Dashboard. Host-Community and Syrian Refugee Communal Relations in Lebanon.

Available at <http://bit.ly/ark-communalrelations>

Table 12: Wave IV RPS findings, crime and violence*

% respondents that agree with 'Presence of Syrian refugees has contributed to more incidence of crime and violence'

Location closest to	Syrian	Lebanese
Bekaa Valley IS	37%	95%
North Christian town	100%	99%
South Akkar IS	21%	99%
Mt. Lebanon coastal village	19%	71%

*Wave IV survey findings. (2019). UNDP & RPS Interactive Dashboard. Host-Community and Syrian Refugee Communal Relations in Lebanon.

Available at <http://bit.ly/ark-communalrelations>

As illustrated here, in most study locations, RPS find that Lebanese generally perceived their neighbourhoods to be slightly less safe than Syrians. The exception to this was in South Akkar IS, where Syrian refugees were reluctant to move freely and expressed particular concern for being identified by the authorities for not having legal residency. RPS findings also show that Lebanese near Bekaa Valley IS feel least safe out of all our study locations, which is consistent with our findings, where many Lebanese said that the presence of Syrian refugees made them feel uneasy walking around the area.

Consistent with RPS findings, we observed that in all study locations Lebanese identified refugees as a source of insecurity more commonly than Syrians did. We observed that many LTI Syrians in North Christian town held similar views on this topic, which likely accounts for the high proportion of Syrians here who were found to hold this view. We also observed that in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, Lebanese tended to focus on the economic aspects of refugee presence, rather than security as is the case in other study locations.

In North Christian town, Lebanese said that they considered their community to be safe because of the checkpoint at the entrance of town and the other steps the municipality has taken to monitor outsiders. Here, both LTI Syrians and Lebanese told us that Syrians walking on the streets after 8pm may have their papers checked by the police and at times detained for a few hours. Here, some Lebanese families said that immediately following

the rape of a Lebanese woman by a Syrian man in the area around six years ago, a nearby village had expelled all Syrians. Curfews were also imposed here and elsewhere in response. These measures have since been withdrawn but there remains a strict practice of reporting all strangers in the area to the ISF, as we directly experienced.

Syrians here told us that the municipality has information on all Syrians living here, and that landlords are required to provide information on their renters. However, in at least one case the Lebanese property owner said that she does not register her Syrian tenants as she *'did not worry.'* Others indicated that they did not fulfill these requirements because they were concerned that they might be prosecuted for having too many tenants staying in their properties or because their properties were sub-standard. Though there were now no official curfews here, Syrians told us that it was common knowledge that checkpoints maintained a quota (said to be 40 per day) for detention. It was therefore common practice to pass checkpoints later in the day, as it is *'easier to travel at night if we need to.'*

Here, LTI Sunni Syrians we lived with shared negative experiences they had with the local Lebanese Christian majority of their town. One LTI Syrian household we lived with who often covers her face partially by a scarf told us that from time to time, Lebanese men and women make inappropriate comments to her on the street about the fact that she covers her head and face. She told us that her husband (also Syrian) has advised her not to go out to avoid this sort of incident. Other female Syrian refugees also recounted similar incidents involving Lebanese Christian women questioning their choice to cover themselves.

Lebanese living in **Mt. Lebanon coastal village** told us that it was safe here, *'especially in the Christian part,'* implying that the area where mainly Sunni Syrians lived was less safe. Lebanese living here pointed out that CCTV cameras had been installed by the municipality following a series of thefts, as they allow you to *'see who is going in and out.'* One family we lived with here said that the municipality had installed these cameras after a series of thefts in the area. Though there was no curfew in effect in this village, Syrians here told us about a neighbouring Christian village that had a 7pm curfew for Syrians. Families here described this other village as more strict, saying that (like the study location North Christian town) no Syrians could stay there without residency permits.

RPS Findings

RPS findings show that Syrians are more likely to experience verbal harassment than Lebanese. In the wave IV surveys, 26.6% of Syrians had experienced verbal harassment, as compared with 8.2% of Lebanese (RPS wave IV, p.32).



Both Syrians and Lebanese described their village as safe, but specifically warned female researchers *'not to walk on the main road'* that was just off the main highway connecting Beirut to another large city. Female researchers observed that cars would slow down or stop to speak with them each time they walked on the road. Downplaying this issue, one Syrian family we lived with said that the *'the cars will stop to harass you as a woman, but this is not an actual threat.'*

Though many Lebanese families in **Bekaa Valley IS** also said the area was safe enough for men to walk around night, others were more cautious. One Lebanese family we lived with here did not feel comfortable allowing his daughters (ages 5 and 10) to walk on the streets on their own at any time of day. The father explained this saying that *'you can't go out without stumbling on Syrians.'* He explained that at the beginning of the *'Syrian crisis'* he had heard that Syrians were stealing, harassing girls, and kidnapping men in the area, though he commented that now *'some say that Syrians would not dare to do anything'* like this. Though this family often shared prejudicial views, they also indicated that they were heavily influenced by negative stories on TV and social media.

Here, Syrian refugees living in the IS often bragged about how *'peaceful'* their community is. People also shared proudly that they were able to *'solve their own'* problems and connected this to maintaining a sense of security within their immediate community. We did not observe any graffiti bearing slogans against Syrians in any study location. We also observed that here, Syrians did not lock the doors to their tents or houses. In most cases refugees and seasonal workers said that they were not concerned that a theft might happen, also quipping they have *'nothing to steal'* (Bekaa Valley IS). One refugee family here told us that *'those living in houses here,'* meaning middle class Lebanese, are *'more cautious' and drive everywhere'.*

Syrian refugees here also shared experiences of harassment by Lebanese. One family said that a Lebanese neighbour was verbally abusive toward the Syrian man next door, as he *'did not like the fact that refugees were renting land adjacent to him.'* He explained that once, this neighbour called the police, who later arrested the Syrian family. He said the Syrian man had to *'pledge never to cause problems again'* to the police. He explained that the police are rarely involved as Syrians here generally *'ignore harassment of this kind'* by Lebanese.

In **South Akkar IS**, one Lebanese family we lived with said that the area was *'so safe'* that *'you could go out at night without being disturbed.'* However, these families also echoed the views of those in Bekaa Valley IS who felt that the media portrays Syrians in a bad light. Syrian families we lived with nearby said similar things, including one host family whose female members often tend to crops in the middle of the night using a flashlight and said they have had no problems and do not feel scared to be outside at that hour.

'I never saw a police officer the entire time I was living in the community.'

Researcher, South Akkar IS.

We observed that incidences of violence or crime committed between Syrians and Lebanese that had happened elsewhere in the country or that were being discussed in the press rarely came up in conversation about security. When asked about these incidents, one Lebanese family in South Akkar IS reflected on a rape of a Lebanese woman by a Syrian man that had occurred elsewhere, following which the Lebanese community had hung the Syrian man from an electricity wire *'for all of the community to see.'* They agreed a strong response such as this was justified, but explained that they would do something like this to anyone who committed such a crime, regardless of where they are from. We observed that such incidents – either with Syrians as victims or perpetrators – were not a common topic of discussion or a significant source of worry for either group across study locations.

RPS Findings

77.8% of Lebanese 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement, *'Violence is sometimes necessary when your interests are being threatened'*, cf 49.5% of Syrians (unchanging from Wave III).



Consistent with RPS findings, Syrians in all study locations did not recount instances of retaliation against Lebanese harassment or other actions in a violent manner. Though we did not get the impression that refugees were interested in retaliating, we also observed that they sensed that any interaction with Lebanese (particularly law enforcement) carried significant risk, and likely would likely also have constrained from taking such an action.

As in Bekaa, Syrian refugees living here said that they considered their area *'safe'* and rarely locked their tents. Though theft was rare, the only instances shared by people in our study came from here. Here, one refugee father we lived with said that his son's wallet had been stolen from the tent around a year ago, which spawned a series of additional security concerns. He said the thieves had acquired a sim card with his 25-year old son's ID and used it to make *'threatening'* phone calls. The police took his son to jail, where he paid US\$ 2,000 for bail and US\$ 8,000 to a lawyer, all of which they borrowed from relatives. As the case is still open, he said his son is very careful and tries to limit passing through checkpoints.

Though there were no official curfews in South Akkar IS, one Syrian mother we lived with told us that *'there is no official curfew, just an understanding.'* We observed that many Syrian men here without legal residency limited their movements *'because of patrols'* by the police. Other Syrian refugees here described the patrols as random and though had never actually been stopped, knew other Syrians who had been. One father we lived with here said that *'if we go outside the camp we will be taken into custody by the police for a few days,'* so he only goes to the pharmacy, market, and mosque nearby. As a result, this family said that women in the family work outside the home instead of men, which the men said is the opposite of how it was in Syria. Some refugees explained and we observed that they were very cautious

to not wear traditional Syrian clothing except in their immediate vicinity of their tents as a further tactic to avoid being identified by the police while walking on the street. Though these self-imposed restrictions represented a significant limitation to lives of these families, no one we met said that they knew anyone who had faced consequences when these restrictions were not observed.

Checkpoints

At least two-thirds of Syrian refugees and seasonal workers said that they did not have legal residency in Lebanon and shared that being detained at checkpoints was the most significant security concern to them. People told us that these checkpoints were often established physical locations, generally on major highways. Syrians in all study locations agreed that men of working age were most likely to be checked, and felt that women, children, and elderly people could travel more freely. Syrians in all study locations knew the location of permanent checkpoints and often structured their days around avoiding them. We observed that Syrian refugees worried most about being caught at checkpoints, all Syrians without valid residency avoided these checkpoints where possible. Syrians in Bekaa Valley IS also explained that there were also 'pop up' checkpoints from time to time and used WhatsApp groups to warn others.

Syrians across study locations told us that those who were stopped at a checkpoint without valid residency papers generally faced a fine and, in some cases, a short time in prison. The official and unofficial fees required to resolve this issue varied by location. In Bekaa Valley IS, one Syrian refugee family said that if you are stopped at a checkpoint without residency papers, you are required to pay US\$ 400, which could then be reduced to US\$ 267 if *'the UN intervenes at court'*. Most Syrians across study locations explained that if you did not pay these amounts, you would be taken to jail. One Syrian seasonal worker family in Mt. Lebanon coastal village said they had a Syrian visitor who was stopped at a checkpoint with expired residency papers. He was taken to jail but was released two days later when someone came to pay the US\$ 158 fine, though the motorbike he had been driving had been confiscated. One Syrian family in Bekaa Valley IS said that they had to pay US\$ 3 per person to pass a *'pop up checkpoint'*. Though this was cheaper than any official fine, the family still found it challenging to pay this much money, as they had five people in the vehicle at the time.

As this system allows space for Lebanese security to leverage additional fees, Syrians without legal papers face an unpredictable set of fees, leaving them at the mercy of the security forces and with no options for redress.

Many Syrian refugees in Bekaa Valley IS said that refugees are arrested at checkpoints on a daily basis. They explained that they would be kept in prison and often made to clean, are insulted, and sometimes beaten. One family said that prisons receive money from the UN to cover the cost of each prisoner, but did not see evidence of where this money was going. In other study locations people knew very few people who had actually been taken to prison after being stopped at a checkpoint. Refugees here also told us that when they are arrested, the papers they receive from courts are confusing, as sometimes they provide *'15 days free movement'* and other times they request immediate departure from Lebanon, which refugees all agreed was never enforced.

When discussing the prospect of going to Lebanese prison, some Syrian refugees contrasted what happened when one is arrested in Lebanon to similar situations in Syria. One family in South Akkar IS said being stopped at a checkpoint was not as bad as getting arrested in Syria because the Lebanese security forces *'don't kill you, unlike in Syria.'* They said that, at most, in Lebanon you would be kept in prison for a day, and contrasted this to the experience of their cousins, who had been arrested in Syria and *'just disappeared.'* Syrian refugee families in Bekaa Valley IS made similar comparisons to Syria, where they said people who were arrested *'vanished.'* Despite the fact that refugees here and South Akkar IS viewed this as a relatively light consequence compared to what they might face in Syria, they appeared to have internalised this as a threat.

In addition to official checkpoints on roads run by the Lebanese police, in Mt. Lebanon coastal village, Syrian seasonal workers also said that they would be stopped by Lebanese security and other government officials occasionally. One household father here explained that he *'sometimes gets arrested by the municipality'* because *'his papers aren't legal.'* He explained that this was done by an officer from the municipality rather than the police or other security forces, who would keep him in the municipality for three hours at a time to make sure he *'couldn't go to work.'* After that he would be released without a fine. People living here said they did not usually *'get arrested officially,'*

unlike in the neighbouring village which imposed a curfew. Though in North Christian town Syrians did not share specific stories of being arrested by the police or municipality, they commonly told us that frequent police checks, control, and close monitoring by the municipality meant that anyone without residency papers would have to take special care to avoid significant hassle, arrest, or expulsion from the municipality.

We observed that all Syrians without residency papers worried they would be caught by the police, though those in South Akkar IS were particularly nervous. Though they were concerned with going to prison, their bigger concern was being 'sent back' to Syria. No one here or in any other study location said that they had known anyone that this had happened to, but we felt that the prospect of this somehow occurring was ever present in discussions. Syrians across study locations commonly spoke of their communities as increasingly less welcoming, and interpreted this as a sign that this possibility was growing.

In contrast, though Syrian seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village did try to avoid checkpoints, they appeared to be relatively relaxed about their residency status and their interactions with police, and moved around much more freely. This was also the case for LTI Syrians without legal residency in North Christian town, who appeared to move freely within the town.

These restrictions influenced where Syrians without legal residency sought medical care and made it difficult for families to obtain official documents from hospitals. For example, one Syrian family in Mt. Lebanon coastal village has not been able to file for relief after their oldest son died last year, as doing so requires them to pass a nearby checkpoint. The mother explained that she was concerned her sons 'will get arrested' going through the checkpoint, and she does not want to go alone.

Dispute resolution

Syrians and Lebanese in all communities told us that they rarely experience a dispute, violence, or crime that requires them to seek outside help. As a result, when discussing their options for seeking help, many people spoke hypothetically as they had not themselves sought help outside their immediate family and neighbourhood.

Syrians and Lebanese commonly told us that in case of disputes, their first response is to resolve

this within their community. Often times this meant seeking advice first from their family and neighbours. Though women said they would seek advice from other women in their community, they did not look to these or other women to mediate or arbitrate an issue. In Mt. Lebanon coastal village, one Syrian woman we lived with said, echoing others, that she would 'go to her [female] neighbours first' and then seek help from her sons 'if it was something more serious.' Both men and women said that if resolution could not be achieved this way they ultimately look to older men within their community or male community leaders in order to facilitate these processes.

In North Christian town, LTI Syrians with legal residency said that they would seek help from the police. This appeared to be as much a self-preservation measure as anything else as they explained that they wanted to maintain the image of a cooperative community member by updating the police on any instance of security threat in the town. LTI Syrians without legal residency said they would seek help from the *mukhtar* rather than go to the police. The *mukhtar* is a Lebanese (man) elected on 4 year term of office to serve the neighbourhood to settle disputes and we observed to be respected by Lebanese and Syrians. In North Christian town, we met several and they explained how they settled disputes between neighbours and helped maintained peaceful relations.

Lebanese and Syrians in South Akkar IS said that they went to different people for help with disputes. Lebanese families we lived with said that they went to the 'head of their tribe,' whom they said was an elder in the community. Lebanese men we lived with here said that they go to him with 'any issue' and he makes a decision on behalf of the tribe. These men said that he is very influential, and that once he makes a decision 'people need to listen to the tribe no matter what.' In contrast, Syrian refugees we lived with in South Akkar IS told us that they seek help from the Syrian *Shawish* who 'is in charge of everything' within the camp. They explained that he is responsible for maintaining order in the camp, and that he will 'be held responsible in front of Lebanese authorities for anything that happens there.' Though Syrian refugees here spoke of him as friendly, one family also explained that he had very little actual power and influence outside the camp. As a result, they said he is limited to providing advice and handling 'minor brawls,' which people said were rare.

In Bekaa Valley IS, both Lebanese and Syrian

families told us that in the event of a conflict, they prefer not to go to the police. Rather, both said that they would seek help from a *mukhtar* or other *'influential Lebanese family'* nearby, who will arbitrate the process. Unlike in South Akkar IS, no one here said that they would seek help from the *Shawish*, as he was not influential enough to support them. Syrian refugee families here told us that in Syria, it would be shameful to go to authorities for help in most cases, and would thus be a last resort. One refugee family we lived with here, echoing others we met, explained this, saying *'mind your own business and you are safe'*. Another Syrian refugee father explained that *'as long as you are by yourself, behave, and do not provoke them (Lebanese), no one will provoke us.'*

In Mt. Lebanon coastal village, both Syrian and Lebanese people said that disputes were rare but that there was no *'go to'* person to resolve disputes. Lebanese people said they would go to the police or municipality, while Syrians said that they would seek help from their Lebanese bosses or landlords. One Syrian seasonal worker we lived with here told us that there is no point in seeking help from the municipality, as *'the right is always with the Lebanese.'*

Though in most cases people did mention others they would go to for help, we also observed that Syrians in particular were very reluctant to seek help or expose themselves in any way. This was most evident in South Akkar IS, where refugees we lived with told us that they rarely sought help. One Syrian refugee family we lived with here told us that there had been incidences of bullets landing in the camp from bird hunters nearby. Once, they said that a stray bullet landed in their tent, narrowly missing their children. They said that as they don't have their residency papers in order and *'don't know a powerful person in the community,'* they did not complain to anyone about this and just *'let it go.'* They said that not only were they reluctant to approach the authorities, they also did not want to cause any trouble with the hunters, who they said might *'hurt us.'* We observed a number of bullets on the ground in the camp.

Another Syrian family here told us that a similar incident occurred in which a stray bullet fatally hit a sleeping child, potentially the result of celebratory gunfire. She said that *'even when we are inside our tents we are not safe,'* and explained that this family also did not report this incident, as they knew no one influential enough to get justice.

Another Syrian family we lived with said that the *Shawish's* daughter was also accidentally shot in this way, but there was *'nothing he could do.'* This is consistent with RPS findings that Syrians shared a reluctance to report issues because of their undocumented status, power differential vis-a-vis the Lebanese, and disinclination to speak with authorities acquired from their experiences in Syria.

RPS Findings

RPS findings show that 48.8% of Lebanese said they would *'get involved'* if they *'saw someone getting harassed'*, compared to 29.3% of Syrians (RPS wave IV, p.25).



9

Future and Priorities

This section explores the future hopes and aspirations for both Syrian and Lebanese families that we met.

In most cases, Lebanese people said they would like Lebanon to return to how it was before 2011, though this meant different things to different people.

Most Lebanese we met across study locations, particularly in South Akkar IS and Bekaa Valley IS where there is a large IS presence, said that refugees returning to Syria would be an improvement. In some cases, Lebanese also indicated LTI Syrians in the group that they would have wanted to leave. A struggling Lebanese businessman that we lived with in North Christian town explained that *'if the government of Lebanon sends all Syrians back, it would be better and life will be easier.'* However, he also explained that he does not think this will happen because *'parliament is always fighting each other.'* Other Lebanese here believed the Syrian refugees should leave, but the Syrians that had been in the area for decades could stay.

Christian Lebanese shop owners and land owners in Mt. Lebanon coastal village said that Syrian men could continue to come to the area for agricultural

labour, but that their families should return to Syria. One older Christian man here said, *'don't you see its better for them to go back to their country?'* Compared to other study locations, researchers commented that here, relatively few Lebanese people they met said that they wanted the Syrians to leave. Instead, more people here said that they wanted Syrians to have fewer children and to *'stop throwing garbage on the street.'*

When discussing the topic of return, most Lebanese mentioned that it was important for Syria to be 'safe' before people could return. One Lebanese farmer in South Akkar IS said, *'how can you ask people to go back their country if it's not safe.'* Similarly, a Lebanese shop owner man who is married to a Syrian woman in Bekaa Valley IS told us that *'they need to go back...but I'm not sure if it is safe for them.'*

However, in a number of cases, Lebanese people said they believed that there was an increasing number of areas in Syria that were now considered safe, based on updates and news from Facebook, WhatsApp, and personal contacts across Lebanon and Syria. Near Bekaa Valley IS, one middle class Lebanese family asked, *'why can't they go back to the safe areas?'* and a Lebanese shop owner asked, *'why are they still here when the war is over?'* Similarly, a Christian Lebanese shop owner in North Christian town said that *'things are good in some places so why not move [back]?' referring to Damascus.* However, one Lebanese man in South Akkar IS explained that he hoped the Syrians can go back to Syria because, *'they want to, not because we want them out.'*

Different groups of Syrians we met said that they looked forward to different things in the future, though all prioritised keeping their families together. LTI Syrians in North Christian town viewed Lebanon as their home and were focused on building their businesses and improving education for their children. Those who had not obtained legal residency wanted to do so and hoped that this process would be easier in the future.

While some Syrian seasonal workers hoped to stay in Lebanon permanently, others said that they would like to return to Syria someday. A number of male seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village explained that even if their families return to Syria one day, they would continue to come to Lebanon for work as they *'couldn't earn as much in Syria as they do in Lebanon.'* Those who wanted

to stay said that they hoped that requirements to obtain sponsorship from a Lebanese individual would come to an end.

Syrian refugees, particularly those living in IS, almost unanimously said that they would like to return to Syria and expected to do so in the future. Refugees often referred to the way things used to be when discussing the future. For example, a refugee family living in Bekaa Valley IS said, *'do you think anyone wants to live in a tent? We had houses in Syria.'* Refugees often reflected on their former lives in Syria in a positive light, recalling positive memories, and the homes and land they used to own, and contrasting this to their deprivations in Lebanon.

'During both immersions, I didn't meet that any Syrian had a pleasant memory from Lebanon. All the fun and enjoyment happened in Syria. It seems like time froze for them.'

Researcher field notes, Bekaa Valley IS and South Akkar IS.

However, despite the widespread hope among refugees to return to Syria, very few refugees we met said they knew someone who had returned, with the exception of two families in Bekaa Valley IS who had returned in recent months. One refugee family here who came from rural Damascus said they had heard news that many Syrians are starting to return but believed this is propaganda, as *'none of our contacts there know anyone who has gone back.'*

Many refugees said they had not gone back to Syria because there was *'nothing left'* to return to, as their houses had been destroyed or given away to opposing political factions. One refugee father in Bekaa Valley IS whom we lived with said that his family was the last to leave his hometown in 2012 after the area had been bombed. He said, he has

since received videos showing that *'everything back home has been looted, even the floor tiles.'* In most cases, refugees told us that they kept up to date with news from their home communities on Facebook, WhatsApp and other websites, and said they had a good sense how the war had affected their areas. One family in South Akkar IS said that the area outside Homs where they were from had been *'ruined and abandoned'*. They explained that they could not return. Even if they lived in a tent as they do now in Lebanon, there is *'no one there'* now.

Another family here explained that they had sold their house in Syria so that they could afford to rent accommodation in Lebanon. A father we lived with in Bekaa Valley IS explained that without a house in Syria he felt he didn't really have anywhere else to go, and another whose house had been destroyed questioned *'what are we going back to?'* Some seasonal workers in Mt. Lebanon coastal village shared similar stories, saying *'we don't have a house in Syria anymore'* since the *'rebels took over the houses.'* They explained that as the Syrian government had compelled people to move to Idlib from other places, their house would not be available even if the rebels had gone as the government had *'given away'* all the vacant houses to these new families. Though very few Syrians we met said that their houses and land in Syria were still intact, those who did cited this as a strong motivator to return.

Some Syrian refugees mentioned *'guarantees of safety'* as a specific condition for returning to Syria. One Syrian man in South Akkar IS said that *'you need the international community to support this to keep people safe.'* However, many other Syrians explained that an important factor in their judgment on whether or not Syria was safe would be to consider the entity in power. These discussions often hinged on the fact that many Syrians assumed those in control of the Pro-GoS will still control Syria after the war is over. One researcher in South Akkar IS said, *'when I asked why they didn't just go somewhere else in Syria, they said that only people who are loyal to the Government of Syria are in Syria, anyone left there supports the regime.'* A Syrian seasonal worker in Mt. Lebanon coastal village explained that *'people who support Assad will go back to Syria after things are finished.'* Another man here shared a similar view, saying *'you can live in a country where there are schools and hospitals but I'm not willing to trade this for getting arrested every time*

you express an opinion.' One refugee family in Bekaa Valley IS had similar concerns, saying, *'you might get arrested if you say something political-even a simple thing – like theft of bread – get beaten and family does not hear any more from you. Could live happily if you don't oppose the Syrian Government – they have spies. You can't trust anyone.'* However, other Syrians across study locations *'didn't care who is in power'* but worried about the safety of their children back in Syria.

In addition, Syrian refugee families were concerned about returning, as they feared conscription into the Syrian Army. Syrian families in all study locations noted this as a significant concern for their sons and any men in their family aged less than 43 years. Many families said they were *'scared'* of serving in the military, both for political reasons, as well as of the risk of injury or death. Two male refugees in South Akkar IS explained that they *'will wait to get older to go back'* to avoid this even though they do not think things will have improved in Syria even in ten or twenty years time. One man here said that in Lebanon *'I live in a tent. I would rather live in a tent in Syria but can't do this because of military service.'* Refugees here explained that they had previously used fake identification papers and fake medical records to get out of military service in Syria and knew many others who had done the same. Some men here said they hoped the conscription requirement would be dropped soon, either as a matter of policy or because the war will end.

Relatively few Syrian refugees said they wanted to be resettled elsewhere. Those who did, generally spoke of opportunities to go to Europe or Canada – other destinations were rarely mentioned. Relatively few people had known someone who had gone to one of these places, and most said that the UN is involved in this process, but did not know how the process worked. Many refugees told us that they would not want to go as they may risk being separated from their often large, extended families. One refugee we lived with in South Akkar IS said that in the past she has *'prevented anyone in her family from travelling abroad'* as she was concerned the family might be separated. Though she thought the camp was a *'bad place,'* she explained that she *'would only leave Lebanon with her entire family.'*

Those we met that did have a strong desire to be resettled said that their family or other connections to these locations was a strong motivation for going. One Syrian Kurdish family we lived with in

Bekaa Valley IS specifically wanted to go to Turkey and did not want to go back to Syria even if it *'is fixed,'* explaining that they are Kurdish and will feel at home in Turkey. Other refugee families in South Akkar IS said they would like to go to Germany as they currently have relatives there.

We observed that refugees who did want to return to Syria did not have specific plans of how to do so. Even though in most cases these individuals had lived in Lebanon for six to eight years, they viewed their lives in Lebanon as temporary and framed themselves as waiting to go back to Syria. We observed even though large numbers of refugees we spoke to did want to return, no one had a specific plan of how this would happen. No one mentioned specifics of how they would travel, support they expected from the UN or other ways it would be funded, any legal aspects of the process, or how they would rebuild their homes. Though most generally said that they were waiting for things to be *'safe'* in Syria, they did not appear to have a specific circumstance they seemed to be looking for or a specific set of events that would signal safety. These elements were left vague, as most people focused simply on the idea that they would one day be living somewhere else, likely in Syria, and appeared to be biding their time in the interim, focusing on day-to-day life and survival.

Similarly, though Syrian refugees prioritised the safety of their children when talking about aspirations, most did not discuss specific hopes for their children in terms of education or job prospects. Though we interacted with relatively few refugee children during the immersion, many of those said they did not remember life outside the camp or that they had been born there. In South Akkar IS, one Syrian refugee man showed his five-year old son a photo of a building on his phone, to which the son replied *'it's a big tent'*. We observed that many of these children and adolescents often struggled to consider their own aspirations and what they *'wanted to be'* when they were older.

In the short term, Syrian refugees and seasonal workers who were planning to return to Syria said they were concerned primarily with regaining the aid that had been cut, or accessing new aid that felt they were entitled to by having their UN registration files processed. Though some said that they would like to gain legal residency in Lebanon, many others did not see this as a priority.

Although Syrians of all backgrounds had different

priorities for the future, they all shared a common concern of being forced to go back to Syria. Though Syrians who planned to return to Syria eventually were concerned about this for reasons of safety mentioned above, Syrians who planned to stay in Lebanon permanently were the most concerned. In particular, LTI Syrians we met shared that given many Lebanese people oppose refugees, they were concerned that all Syrians would be *'forced to go,'* including them.

Study Implications

The findings of this study provide a number of implications related to relationships between Syrians and Lebanese.

Over the course of the immersions, we observed that conversations between people who had not met before commenced by establishing nationality, ethnicity and confessional backgrounds, which were then progressively followed up with gentle probes to ascertain political affiliations. This level of caution is unsurprising given the tensions and suspicions Syrians and Lebanese have both experienced in their lifetimes.

This process created inconsistencies and contradictions in study findings even within a single household let alone a community. For example, we found opinions were often voiced but without any direct experience or examples. People talked about competition for work as an issue but could not provide any examples where this had actually happened. The opinions shared were often those they had heard through (and legitimized by) the media. Sometimes it was felt that such opinions were a way to focus a general feeling of unease (among Lebanese and LTI Syrians) about the influx of Syrians which was more difficult to express. Both the caution surrounding sharing information and the default to popular opinion has implications for RPS and other perception studies as answers to questions are likely to contain survey sponsor bias (who is asking the question) and habituation bias (easy to express routine answer). This observation also suggests that the identity and behaviour of those collecting data may have a particular impact on the findings.

The study has highlighted the need to disaggregate respondent views on both national

and confessional lines, as well as according to how people themselves distinguish each other. For example, LTI Syrians and Syrian seasonal workers share many of the same views as Lebanese regarding the influx of Syrians post-2011. Lebanese draw distinctions between their relationships of trust with LTI Syrians with their views on newcomers. Both Lebanese and Syrians share prejudice against small marginalised minority groups such as Bedouins and Doms. 'Them' and 'us' distinctions are more often framed in terms of status, socio-economic and (assumed) political affiliations than nationality and faith. This has implications for how survey data is disaggregated and interpreted.

The term 'tension' may not accurately describe unhelpful relationships between groups. This study indicated that relationships may be characterized by significant power differences and resentment in some cases but is not often linked to violence. Insecurity that does exist in these relationships was often linked to policies that create Syrian dependence on individual Lebanese (as sponsor, employers or landlords). These ideas should be deepened in the next study round, and may provide alternative framing for others seeking to understand the nature of the relationships between these groups.

The theme of equity emerged consistently among both Lebanese and LTI Syrians when discussing aid distribution to refugees. They wanted assurances that aid was going to the right people, was not abused and was properly accounted for. Additional framings for RPS questions on this topic may cover equitable support, issues around who deserves aid, as well as the impact of aid on relations within

the Syrian community may help better understand the how this intervention affects communities.

Lebanese concerns about equity also extended to public services like healthcare and schools, where people focused on the fairness of subsidies and support services they believed Syrians received. These concerns overshadowed Lebanese worries related to pressure on services caused by the Syrian influx. Lebanese families identified the cost of healthcare and school transport as a particular source of stress, and questioned why these were heavily subsidized or free for Syrian refugees. This resentment has implications not only for the interpretation of questions in RPS but also on the how aid is distributed and communicated.

Related to aid distribution, this study also identified a lack of transparency and accessible information for Lebanese and Syrians around what aid is being provided, who is eligible, how it can be obtained and the rationale behind recent cuts. Such ambiguity fuels speculation and jealousies about distribution of aid and concerns about misallocations. Making such information more accessible would help address these issues and help settle concerns that UN allowances create unintended incentives. The views expressed during this study also suggest a need to review programmes targeted at Syrians and examine potential ways to include poor and disadvantaged Lebanese and that assessments, including the RPS, should include poor and disadvantaged Lebanese. Such inclusion should be well publicized to counter accusations of inequity.

This study indicates that Lebanese rarely attribute poor quality service provision to the Syrian influx, but rather view this as a symptom of weak national and local governance. This is consistent with RPS findings, which suggest that Lebanese link poor quality services to a variety of factors rather than simply Syrian pressure. Both Lebanese and Syrians complain about corruption in public services and utilities, as well as in municipalities, which they note results in unreliable electricity and water supplies, poor flood protection and waste disposal. This suggests that initiatives between Syrians and Lebanese on issues of mutual concern which aim to hold administration to account may provide an opportunity for cooperation between these groups.

As noted above, competition for work may be a popular way to explain challenging relations between Syrians and Lebanese, but is very rarely supported by personal experience.

The fact that most Syrian refugee families we interacted with rely on a single income earner, that they mostly occupy menial and manual work which Lebanese neither want or compete for, that small enterprises (such as street vending, hair-cutting, clothes selling) mostly serve other refugee Syrians should be shared widely to balance the perception that Syrians are taking work away from Lebanese. Further studies might be required to establish whether the cuts to refugee allowances change this situation in the future.

We did not encounter NGO programmes attempting to promote social interaction between nationalities. Syrian refugees shared a sense of living in limbo and waiting to return which stifles short term aspirations and shapes day to day interactions. The fact that they have few social interactions with Lebanese is not a concern as they do not have aspirations to stay or integrate and prefer to enjoy the closeness of their own families and neighbours from Syria. This physical separation between Syrian and Lebanese extended to their children, for whom supporting joint activities may be an inroad into helping to establish broader relations between the two groups.

Both Lebanese and Syrians described all study locations as safe. Though none had curfews or overt security presence, both Christian locations had banned IS and effectively monitored the movements of outsiders. Syrian refugees consistently shared that they kept to themselves to avoid trouble and used their own systems to contain any confrontations. This often included restricting their own movement even in the absence of a curfew, based on a general sense of that Syrians without residency were vulnerable being identified and arrested. RPS data on regulations and restrictions enforced by municipalities does not currently capture these 'unofficial' curfews, which are indicative of an increasing sense of threat and hostility among Syrians.

When reflecting on previous incidences of violence between Lebanese and Syrians, members of both groups accepted that crimes can occur equally in either community. Both shared a need to obtain justice and at times retribution, but asserted that this was the case for any incident, regardless of the perpetrator. These views left the research team wondering if the media has fuelled tensions by framing justice demonstrations along ethnic lines. The findings of this study also have specific implications for understanding the 'propensity for negative collective action' measures used to

understand these dynamics in the RPS, described in further detail below.

Given that all Syrian refugees we interacted with aspire to return home, it seems that this is an important message to promote to Lebanese (and LTI Syrians) who want to see a resumption of the pre-2011 situation. All Lebanese we met agreed that they would not want Syrians to return if it was unsafe, but they also do not fully appreciate that Syrians need to return to their home communities where they may still have assets and networks, not just anywhere in Syria. Conspicuous efforts to provide information on the readiness of areas of Syria where repatriation is 'safe' needs to be shared with Syrian refugees and Lebanese alike. Similarly, as no Syrian refugees we met had planned their repatriation, counselling and advisory services towards this end would provide meaningful assistance. Publicising such programmes would confirm many refugees' intentions to return, which would alleviate growing concerns among Lebanese (and LTI Syrians).

This study only covered four governorates and will be expanded in July, 2019. Already it is clear, and unsurprising, that each location has unique characteristics which shape people's views and relationships. Following completion of the next phase of the immersion research we hope carry out further analysis to better understand additional commonalities between each location that would have programmatic implications. However, we feel that contextual differences strongly emerging from this first phase of the study are important to consider when planning future support and interventions.

Propensity for Violence

These findings also have implications for better understanding the concept of 'Propensity for Negative Collective Action' employed in RPS analysis, which utilises an index of multiple questions that together seek to assess propensity for violence.¹⁹ Though these questions form part of a broader psychometric analysis, the study findings provide insight into the factors that may shape respondent responses.

People in this area can be trusted': We observed that people view their locality as composed of specific communities and subcommunities, the definitions of which are often fixed along a number of lines (religion, tribe, socio-economic, length of time living in Lebanon, etc), however this concept is not encompassed in this question. Responses to this question will be challenging to contextualise – a Lebanese person may say that people can be trusted, but we will not know whether the respondent is referring to Syrian refugees or their Lebanese neighbours. Similarly, this will also not capture the fact that, as we found, both Lebanese and Syrians commonly resented those that they defined as outside their own community.

People around here are willing to help their neighbours': Similar to the question above, this question also masks the differences within both the Lebanese and Syrian communities. For example, the finding that there are high levels of mutual support within many Syrian communities, but often low levels of mutual support between Syrians and Lebanese would not emerge based on this wording. Examining examples of community backlash (particularly against Lebanese who tried to help Syrians) such as the one identified in Mt. Lebanon coastal village may be an interesting alternative way to understand these relational dynamics.

If some of your neighbours got into a fight would someone intervene to resolve it?': We found in all study locations that Syrians were particularly hesitant to take any steps that might expose them or put themselves at risk. We found that in many cases, they did not seek help after experiencing injustice or file complaints, which was explained largely by their sense that things were skewed toward Lebanese socially and legally. This was compounded by the vulnerability that most Syrians

said they felt, either resulting from a lack of legal residency or based on the increasingly negative public discourse related to Syrians in Lebanon. As such, the fact that Syrians respond in low numbers to this question does not indicate low levels of mutual support (from their side), and thus does not fully provide the insight intended behind this question.

When tensions are high, some restrictions on foreigners' movement or curfews can help keep this area safe': When asked to Lebanese, this question is clear and would likely provide insight into the propensity of violence concept. For Syrians, tailoring this question to understand whether they restrict their own movements in times of tension, as Syrian refugees did in South Akkar IS, would provide better insight into the Syrian experience of the dynamic, as this is a concrete action that signifies the sense of a larger threat.

Violence is sometimes necessary when your interests are being threatened': This question is useful and likely provides insights into the relationship dynamics that the scale is seeking to measure. As many Syrians we met also experienced harassment, an additional question considering verbal harassment in particular may also help examine less extreme but more pervasive indications of rising tensions.

¹⁹ See for example Regular Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon, Wave IV, September 2018. Available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67048>

Annex 1

Study team

Study Team Leaders

Dee Jupp, PhD

Danielle Stein


Research Management and Advisory Team

Sameea Sheikh

Sherria Ayuandini

Team members

Bekaa	North Lebanon	Akkar	Mt. Lebanon
 Fatima Hallal <i>Lebanese</i>	 Jinan Zaaiter <i>Lebanese</i>	 Anonymous <i>Syrian</i>	 Nour Owiss <i>Syrian</i>
 Ruby Haji Naif <i>Syrian</i>	 Nour Owiss <i>Syrian</i>	 Dana Abou Assi <i>Syrian</i>	 Nourhanne Moukahal <i>Lebanese</i>
 Ibrahim Al Zaim <i>Lebanese</i>	 Dana Abou Assi <i>Syrian</i>	 Ibrahim Al Zaim <i>Lebanese</i>	 Ruby Haji Naif <i>Syrian</i>
 Baraa Seraj Eddin <i>Syrian</i>	 Redwan Al Sayed <i>Syrian</i>	 Bara Seraj Eddin <i>Syrian</i>	 Redwan Al Sayed <i>Syrian</i>

 Female  Male

Annex 2

Areas for conversation



Futures

Aspirations and hopes (short term/long term), optimism/pessimism (outlook) (disaggregated by age, gender, social group etc). Repatriation considerations. Feelings about the future. Plans, strategies, future oriented action. Best/worst case scenarios.



Local economy

Jobs (range, quality, legality, hazards, recourse for grievances, bonds etc), wages, employment conditions. Access to jobs/job information. Security of employment. Perceptions of employment, employment opportunity, competition for work. Work relations. Experience of economic stress and coping. Patronage. Exploitation. Informal economy. Shadow economy.

Opportunities for advancement. Taxes (formal/informal). Usefulness of aid.

Safety and security

Perception of community/own security, changes experienced. Safe /unsafe places, people, activities. Incidents of insecurity. Drivers and triggers. Tipping points.

Harassment –nature, trends. Abuse- nature, trends. Incidents of intimidation -nature of response, redress mechanisms, support. Levels of crime (targeted/pervasive). Who is safe/unsafe. Anxieties and concerns (for family, for others) Imposed restrictions on freedoms/movement (self-imposed restrictions) Observation of graffiti, posters , acts of hostility/ promotion of cohesion etc . Social media posts & reaction. Popular media reflections of the situation & reaction. Who can help. Views on state/non-state security.

Access to services/service pressure

NB:All viewed through the lens of access= physical, financial and social access (status/rank, behaviour of service providers, entitlement etc) & perceived differences between residents and refugees

Perception and use of **health services** (formal and informal/ state, private, relief services)- service provider behaviour/ responsiveness. Health resources. Quality of health services in study communities. Access to dentistry, ophthalmic and specialist care/assistive aids. Equality and equity in access.

Access to **education** (early childhood to higher education, vocational education, adult education, continuing education etc)- barriers to access, discrimination, self-opting out.

Access to **utility services** (water, electricity, garbage collection, phone etc) quality of service, adequacy and responsiveness.

Access to **information & advisory services**. Access to **targeted relief/aid/support services**. Perceived fairness.

Access to **security services & legal support**. (grievance, disputes, justice). Access to transportation and public spaces.



Social capital

Social norms, social groups within the community (formal/informal; temporary/long-term). Basis (religion, self-help, support, political, issue –based, security, social, recreational). Membership (motivation, age, gender). Self-initiated/ externally facilitated. Relevance/significance/importance to members/to community. Relationships between groups. Networks. Within-group social capital (shared values and boundaries, trust. Collaboration & collaboration). Feelings towards other groups. Access to resources. Jealousies/ tensions. Obligations/restrictions. Prejudice and friendship. Changes in intra-community & inter-community group dynamics. Hindering/helping factors. Role of family/kin.

Inter-group social capital- extent of network beyond the community. Who is in/out. Efficacy of networks, limitations and barriers to networks. Formal and informal rules.

Context

Community Rural/ urban; type of settlement (ITS, rented, tied etc) physical access to community; Size of community, main livelihoods, culture/religion, access to facilities & amenities. Community/settlement history. Sub-communities. Community perceptions of relative poverty/development (cf other communities, cf within the community). Perceptions of the area as a place to live.



Household/family: profile of household lived with: nos. in household, relationships, head of household; ages, genders; education & qualification levels, culture; religion, skills; dependents; history/migration history; nature of work (formal/informal; skilled/unskilled) Main/subsidiary income sources- Wellbeing/poverty self-perceptions. Role of seasonality in relative wellbeing/poverty. Extent to which basic needs met.

House/ accommodation: location; building materials; layout, state of accommodation; facilities provided in rented property, facilities in ITS; toilet/ drinking water arrangements ; key assets (means of production; use of electricity, phone, TV).

Financial situation

Income/expenditures; level of indebtedness, cash flow and seasonality affects on cash flow, access to formal/informal loans, remittances, access to financial services, mobile money. Financial concerns/worries. Coping mechanisms. Savings. Access to and use of vouchers. Changes.

Aid. Costs of rental, utilities, transport, food. Differentials based on community and origins. Perceptions of fairness.

Legal /civic documentation

Residency papers, rent agreements, birth, marriage registration, identity documentation, employment contracts, difficulties encountered. Rights and entitlements. Speed money, bribes etc.



Annex 3

Study participants

Category	Male		Female	
	Syrian	Lebanese	Syrian	Lebanese
Host family				
Children under 5	8	0	6	6
Children aged (5-12)	12	2	4	9
Children aged (12-18)	7	3	9	7
Adults (18 - 35)	23	4	19	7
Adults (36 - 50)	6	5	6	3
Adults (more than 50)	3	1	4	4
Neighbours				
Children under 5	7	0	2	2
Children aged (5-12)	15	3	0	4
Children aged (12-18)	16	5	3	8
Adults (18 - 35)	76	33	40	47
Adults (36 - 50)	55	21	28	23
Adults (more than 50)	27	5	12	18
Others				
Aid worker – international org	0	0	0	3
Aid worker – local org/NGO	3	0	2	4
Health worker	0	1	1	1
Teacher	0	1	0	4
Municipality officers	0	3	0	0
Community group members	2	0	3	0
Transportation Service Provider	6	8	0	0
Kiosk/food seller	14	16	1	5
Shahwish	2	0	0	0
Other community members	7	4	6	2
	289	115	146	157
	404		303	

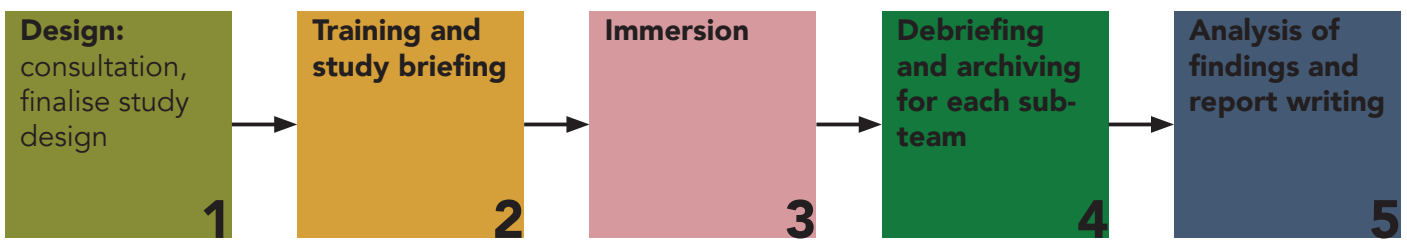
Total: 707 people

 Male  Female

Annex 4

Study process

As per RCA best practice, this study was implemented following a five phase approach, detailed below.



1. Design:

Study design was carried out between December 2018 and January 2019 in close cooperation with UNDP. This included a consultation with the Social Stability Working group as well as research firms in Lebanon with experience carrying out relevant work. The outcome of this process is captured in the Revised Study Design, submitted to UNDP.

2. Training and briefing:

Training and study briefing was carried out in February 2019. As this was the first time RCA was undertaken in Lebanon, a new team had to be formed and trained. All selected researchers completed a full five-day RCA Level 1 training facilitated by the two international RCA researchers with extensive experience of immersion research in other countries. The Level 1 training emphasised the good practice of reflexivity, understanding and mitigating researcher bias and judgement, maintaining informality and ethical considerations in conducting this kind of work. A detailed session on risk and security along with a specific session on child protection were also included. The

training included a two-day/one night immersion in Beirut, where researchers applied in-classroom learning directly in the field. One day of reflection followed the two-day immersion to internalise lesson learns, both from in-classroom training and field immersion.

After the completion of Level 1 training, all study team members participated in a study briefing to familiarise themselves with the specific goals and processes related to this study. This included development of the areas of conversation (see Annex 2), clarification of the selection criteria to be used in identifying host households, as well as study logistics and management.

3. Immersion:

Researcher sub-teams then carried out four-night immersions in each location. Team members entered the communities independently on foot to keep the process 'low key'. They then spent time going around the communities getting to know people and being known, as well as making the purpose of the study clear. Having understood

the purpose of the study, all researchers were invited to stay with families in the area.

During immersions, researchers participated in the daily lives of their host household and community, building insights over the course of the immersion through iterative conversations, with the family and surrounding community, observation and participation.

To illustrate context and findings, photos were taken with people's consent. Whenever possible, families and neighbours were encouraged to make visuals while chatting with the researchers to elaborate their stories. For example, children made drawings of extended families and some family members made charts to explain their household expenditures.

Researchers did not take formal notes during this process, but did keep field diaries to record specific quotes, figures or impressions where necessary.

4. Debriefing:

A two-day debriefing was held for each sub-team immediately after their immersion. This took the form of a facilitated discussion led by the study Team Leaders, during which time the researchers reflected on their experiences and conversations from the immersion, according to the areas of conversation.

The team was asked to repeatedly take the position of the study participants, and to identify the emerging narratives to ensure that researchers did not overlay their own interpretations on the findings. This process enables extensive triangulation as the same themes emerge and are explored by different researchers from different perspectives, different locations, times and research methods (observations, conversations, experiences, visual and photographs). This process also reflects how each researcher engaged with people to ensure that the key elements of this approach were well practiced. In total, the study team spent eight full days de-briefing with the team leaders.

The team also spent time to archive the other data collected from the field and reflect further on household and village information, ensuring all items were appropriately coded and categorised.

All discussions were recorded in detailed debriefing notes which, along with photographs, visuals and field notes from the immersion, formed

the 'data set' or basis of information from which study findings were drawn.

5. Analysis:

Following the debriefing, the team leader and co-team leaders then analysed the full data set. This process followed a grounded theory approach, which includes four stages: (i) Familiarisation (immersion in the findings); (ii) Identification of themes and; (ii) Charting (finding emerging connections). The conventional fourth step is 'interpretation' which RCA purposely eschews in order to maintain closeness to what people themselves share. Four different researchers undertook the analysis to independently identify key themes, ensuring the validity of the overall thematic structure and resulting findings. The key emerging narratives from this process were used as a basis for the report writing.



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