

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

What does UNHCR Lebanon do to help communities help themselves?

UNHCR works to ensure that Lebanese and refugee communities receive **enough support** and **information** to remain safe and preserve their well-being.

We systematically ask refugees and their host communities: What problems do you face? What are your priorities? How can we make our programmes more responsive to your needs? How are you dealing with your problems? And, how can we support your own efforts to address these problems?

To answer these questions, UNHCR identifies and **strengthens the capacities, skills and knowledge** that exist within communities.

UNHCR and other humanitarian actors support community members to enhance their own protection and well-being through a range of interventions. These interventions allow communities to come together to resolve a common problem, and enable them to better understand and support each other. This also entails working more closely with other local actors such as teachers in public schools, nurses and doctors in primary health centres and municipal authorities. UNHCR and partners further support the Ministry of Social Affairs' (MOSA) Social Development Centers with staffing and funding for activities at the community level to better support women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities.

How do we work with communities?

Our experience has shown that effective support can only be achieved in close partnership with the communities that humanitarian actors serve. It is premised on the basis that host communities and refugees are often better placed to identify their most critical problems and know how best to resolve them. By being able to better protect themselves and their communities, they also become less dependent on external aid. In turn, their actions contribute to building healthier communities which better protect and look after their most vulnerable members.



Loula, Outreach Volunteer Syrian refugee and UNHCR outreach volunteer Loula lives in Chekka, Lebanon. The small run-down residence houses over 300 Syrian refugee families. Loula and her family were the first to move into the residence and she quickly became the person new refugees would seek out for advice on how to approach UNHCR and how to receive assistance. "It is stressful and I feel the burden of responsibility, but I love what I am doing because I am helping people," Loula said. Photo credit: UNHCR / S. Baldwin

Key achievements as of 2016



79 community centres

Community centres provide counseling, skills training, recreational activities and awareness sessions (for example, on hygiene promotion and back-to-school campaigns) across Lebanon to over 130,000 persons.



230 community groups

Community groups comprised of both Lebanese and refugees have been supported to be an interface with UNHCR and partners, and have been capacitated to address their problems.



562 outreach volunteers

Outreach volunteers from refugee and host communities provide up-to-date information on services available to their communities and feedback to UNHCR and partners on needs and solutions.



1,129 consulted

Lebanese, Syrian and other refugee women, men, boys and girls have been consulted through individual and group discussions in 2015-2016 to inform humanitarian programming.

Refugee communities support themselves by

Passing on information about services and policies

Identifying gaps in services and assistance

Taking care of the most vulnerable and referring those who need specialized support

Carrying out activities that benefit and protect communities

UNHCR Lebanon relies on communities to carry out the following:

- Pass on updated information on services delivered by public institutions including primary health centres, public schools, MOSA Social Development Centers, as well as the assistance provided by humanitarian and development partners through outreach volunteers who disseminate and explain through leaflets, websites, WhatsApp and SMS messages developed by UNHCR;
- Share updated information on government policies and national frameworks which have an impact on refugees such as residency requirements and obtaining civil documentation including marriage registration, as well as duties and responsibilities under national laws (specific training is provided by UNHCR in this regard);
- Identify and inform UNHCR and partners of gaps in services and assistance that can improve our programmes;
- Take care of the most vulnerable and refer those who need specialized support, including survivors of violence, persons with disabilities, the ill and older persons, to service providers, including medical care, vaccinations, legal aid, education, legal counseling and/or shelters as appropriate; and,
- Provide activities with social and protective benefits such as providing homework support, escorting children to and from school, visiting older and sick persons and raising awareness on good hygiene practices. This also entails extending material support such as small-scale grants to help communities design and implement innovative project to address issues of common concern to both Lebanese and refugees such as garbage collection.



A construction project in South Lebanon will bring clean water to more Lebanese and Syrians in the area.
Photo credit: UNHCR



UNHCR staff speaks with a group of children in Chekka, Lebanon.
Photo credit: UNHCR/ S. Baldwin



A football league of Syrian and Lebanese youth in North Lebanon meets twice a week with equipment provided by UNHCR. Photo credit: UNHCR/ S. Baldwin

HOW REFUGEES ACCESS INFORMATION AND GIVE FEEDBACK



5 UNHCR regional counseling hubs
7,000 counseled per month



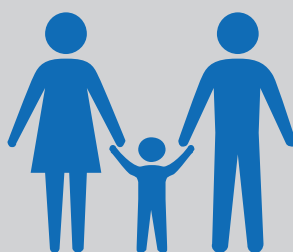
4 UNHCR Hotlines
4,000 calls per week



Communication tree
40,000 families reached via Whatsapp messages from 4,500 focal persons



Bulk SMS & 2-way SMS
communicating with all 270,000 families known to UNHCR



Outreach efforts
several thousand household visits, 562 outreach volunteers, etc.



Facebook
24,000 members in groups run by outreach volunteers



30+ information desks by partner agencies
in community centres in every district of Lebanon



www.refugees-lebanon.org
45,000 unique viewers



Info Material:
Handouts & videos



Radio
1,000 radios provided to refugee focal points

How do local institutions help?

Communities are most effective in carrying out these roles when they are brought together through specific activities that help them address their needs and are linked with local institutions, like municipalities and MOSA Social Development Centers. To facilitate these linkages, UNHCR works to connect communities to local institutions who are best placed to assist community effort.

Examples include:

- Youth, women and parent groups linked to MOSA Social Development Centers that support recreational and learning activities that help them regain a sense of normalcy in their life and equip them with the skills needed to support each other, including their children;
- Neighborhood groups carrying out community improvement projects with municipalities through small funds provided by UNHCR to create a positive community environment;
- Members of a community living on a specific site liaising with municipalities to resolve issues linked to the presence of refugees in the community and alleviate social tensions; and,
- Outreach volunteers passing on information or raising awareness on particular issues such as antennal care, hygiene, civil documentation or enrolment of children in public schools.

What are the benefits?

The views of Lebanese and refugee communities are taken into account in the design and implementation of programmes aimed at supporting them. As a result, they weigh in on decisions that affect their lives and the communities in which they live, which strengthens their dignity. Through our support, communities become more effective in identifying solutions to their own problems and are able to prevent and address them with the help of relevant public authorities and institutions. While making them less dependent on external aid, this approach also enhances the accountability of humanitarian actors towards persons of concern, as it should be.



A Lebanese and Syrian youth group brainstorms projects that would benefit both communities. Photo credit: UNHCR