

# Compendium on Good and Innovative Practices in the Regional Response to the Syria Crisis



**Regional Joint Secretariat**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

United Nations Development Programme

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## Regional Joint Secretariat

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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## Foreword

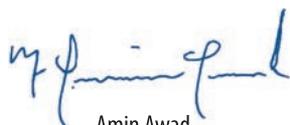
Innovation is at the heart of resilience. The capacity to cope and to adapt to shocks requires being continuously open to learning new approaches. Resilience also calls for improved tools and technologies to protect human and physical capital and to minimise losses when disaster strikes. In this sense, building resilience and investing in innovation are two sides of the same coin.

The scale and complexity of the Syria crisis and its human impact have necessitated a high level of innovation and creativity. International and national actors have worked together across the region, finding new ways to collaborate, developing solid and good practices, and encouraging constructive thinking. Public-private sector partnerships, smart-card technology, digital atlases and integrated, conflict-sensitive approaches are just some of the innovative, good practices that have emerged.

This compendium takes stock of the knowledge and experience that have accumulated since 2011 and aims both to help systematize good practices and to inform the development of a new generation of crisis response. Drawing on over one hundred stakeholder interviews from projects in six countries engaged in the response, the Compendium has distilled the innovative nature of these projects into good practices which can be scaled up and replicated, improving delivery and stimulating new ideas and further innovation.

The examples of innovation in this compendium include both incremental and breakthrough initiatives. These reflect new ways of working, changes in how services are delivered, and even dramatically new models that disrupt standard practice. Responding to the complexity of the situation, humanitarian and development partners have taken more integrated approaches; they have engaged more stakeholders to address issues; and they have found ways to help families, communities, governments and international actors build on their existing capacities and find new solutions to humanitarian and development problems.

With this compendium we aim to bring about programming that is more sustainable, unique and effective for the region, that can be replicated, adapted and scaled up, and that may inspire responses to other complex, regional crises. Though neither exhaustive nor an evaluation of programmes, the compendium is a living document that provides technical support to our partners, and we encourage all concerned to contribute to the further development of the knowledge base provided here. This ongoing collection of knowledge and experience will provide the next chapter in this series of reports on innovative good practices in response to the crisis.



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# Introduction

Now in its fifth year, the protracted conflict in Syria continues to have significant political, security and socio-economic consequences for its neighbours, with the greatest impact felt by those governments and local populations hosting the largest numbers of refugees. As articulated in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-16 (3RP) and the Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP), the international regional response requires a “paradigm shift”, combining on-going humanitarian assistance with increased emphasis on addressing the impact of the crisis in the longer term through strengthening the resilience of affected households, communities, institutions and systems.

This compendium, developed by the UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat for the Regional Response to the Syria Crisis<sup>1</sup>, is intended as a programming tool for international organisations to support expansion of resilience-based responses in the sub-region. It summarises principles of good practice that are particularly pertinent in resilience-based programming and provides concrete examples of how these principles are being implemented in practice. It is the first output of on-going efforts by the Joint Secretariat to document and disseminate good and innovative practices across the sub-region.

The methodology for developing this compendium included a desk review of over 100 publicly available studies, reports and evaluations (see Annex 2); semi-structured interviews and exchanges with over 80 key stakeholders; and a peer review process involving coordination and agency staff across the region and key experts. The overarching framework for identification of good and innovation practices was ‘resilience’ – i.e. the degree to which programmes and approaches contributed to strengthened resilience of households, communities, institutions and systems. Criteria for assessing good and innovative practices included five core evaluation indicators: ‘effectiveness’, ‘efficiency’, ‘impact’, ‘relevance’ and ‘sustainability’, and working definitions of ‘innovation’ (see Annex 1). A number of crosscutting issues were

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<sup>1</sup> The Joint Secretariat was established in mid-2014 in an effort to support increased coherence of emergency and resilience-based programming in the sub-region.

also considered, including social cohesion, drawing on national capacities and knowledge, and links with national planning processes. The focus of this compendium was narrowed to the five main refugee hosting countries - Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt - and on key areas of resilience-based programming for refugees and host communities implemented by international organisations<sup>2</sup>. This compendium does not cover on-going emergency refugee response programmes, nor does it cover responses inside Syria - a dedicated exercise would be necessary in order to properly reflect the particularities of working within Syria.

This compendium is arranged in chapters on sectors of intervention (social cohesion, livelihoods, sustainable habitat, sustainable services) and on key programming modalities (support to local government, cash-based programming, information technology). Each chapter includes a short narrative, outlining in brief good practice principles that are particularly relevant in this sub-region and providing illustrative examples of how these principles have been incorporated into specific projects or programmes implemented by international organisations. More details on each of these initiatives can be obtained from the programme staff indicated or from inter-sector or sector coordinators.

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<sup>2</sup> The compendium was developed over a ten-week period from mid-October to end December 2014.



## Good Practice Principles and Innovation in the Sub-Region

### Good Practice Principles

Adapting aid programmes and approaches to the specific circumstances of a crisis context is perhaps the starting point for good practice. This sub-region is characterised by complex current and historical political, social, religious and ethnic dynamics; it is generally middle-income with high literacy and education levels but with high levels of poverty and unemployment in many areas – particularly amongst youth and women; despite functional governmental institutions and systems some countries have high public deficits; national economies are relatively stable but have been experiencing sluggish growth in recent years; the local, national and regional private sector is vibrant and highly developed but is impacted by sub-regional dynamic political and security conditions; and there is widespread domestic and commercial use of mobile and other technology. Taking these and other contextual factors into consideration, a number of global good practice principles are particularly relevant to this response. Whilst more sector-specific principles are outlined in subsequent chapters, the following principles are relevant across the scope of resilience-based programming.

**Strengthening resilience:** Across the sub-region, government institutions, national civil society, host populations and refugees have demonstrated enormous ability to cope with the day-to-day impact of the Syria crisis. However, accelerating needs and increasing demands are straining their resources and capacities. Investing more in local people and institutions will enable national and local actors to better cope with and recover more quickly from the impact of the crisis and may be a more cost-efficient aid approach in the long run<sup>3</sup>. In this context, resilience means: *“the ability of individuals, households, communities and societies to cope with the adverse impacts of shocks and stresses, to recover from them, and to work with communities and national and local governments to bring about transformational change*

that supports sustainable human development<sup>4</sup>.” Resilience-based strategies should follow three inter-related strategic objectives (as outlined by the UN Development Group - UNDGs<sup>5</sup>):

- **Coping:** individuals, communities, institutions and systems are able to manage sudden increases in pressure without partial or complete collapse;
- **Recovering:** individuals, communities, institutions and systems are able to recover from setbacks and return to prior levels of development and prosperity;
- **Transforming:** individuals, communities, institutions and systems are able to accelerate their development and prevent future crises.<sup>6</sup>

**Human rights-based approach (HRBA)<sup>7</sup>:** Reinforcing the rights of all affected populations, including women, children and youth, the elderly, disabled, is a central pillar of humanitarian and development responses globally. Adopting a human rights-based approach means integrating international human rights standards and principles into all aspects of an aid response, including analysis, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Framing aid in this way helps to promote the sustainability of the response and empowers affected populations to help themselves, including enabling them to participate in the decisions and policy frameworks that guide international and national responses. Integral to the human rights-based approach is holding duty bearers to account – working with governments and other relevant actors to ensure that they are upholding the fundamental rights and freedoms that are guaranteed under international law. The efforts of the United Nations<sup>8</sup>, international NGOs and donor countries are critical to ensuring increased respect for the rights and freedoms of all of those affected by the Syrian crisis.

**Supporting government leadership:** A core component of resilience-based programming in this context is supporting the national, sub-national and local authorities that are leading the response. International aid should support, to the extent possible and appropriate, these governmental responses – with due attention to augmenting their capacities for coordination, aid management,

4 UNDG (2014), “A Resilience-based Development Response to the Syria Crisis: A Position Paper”, p.7.

5 The UNDG is the group of 32 UN funds, programmes, agencies, departments, and offices that play a role in development. See [www.undg.org](http://www.undg.org)

6 UNDG (2014), “A Resilience-based Development Response to the Syria Crisis: A Position Paper”.

7 See for example, OHCHR (2006), “Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation” and OHCHR and UNHCR (2013), “The Protection of Human Rights in Humanitarian Crises: A Joint Background Paper for IASC Principals”.

8 The UN Rights Up Front initiative was launched in 2013 and requires the UN system at all levels to uphold commitments made by the Secretary General to “place the protection of human rights and of people at the heart of UN strategies and operational activities”. See UN (2013), “Rights Up Front”, May.

planning, monitoring and accountability as well as delivery on the ground. This support includes linking international aid programmes with national development or response plans. This is important to maximise the collective impact of external, national and local resources, to ensure more integrated and therefore more effective and cost-efficient responses, and to facilitate more effective policy dialogue on sensitive issues affecting the response.

***Conflict sensitive approaches:*** There is a risk that international assistance may upset the delicate political, social, religious and ethnic balance that exists at local, national and regional levels or exacerbate more recent tensions related to the spill over effects of the Syria conflict. This risk can be mitigated through adopting a conflict-sensitive approach to programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Adopting a conflict sensitive approach simply means: 1). Understanding the context in which international organisations are operating; 2). Understanding the impact that an aid intervention will likely have on that context; and 3). Taking action to mitigate the possible negative impacts and maximize the likely positive impacts<sup>9</sup>. Key risks in this context include challenging existing power dynamics and community structures, fuelling perceptions that refugees are unfairly receiving preferential treatment, and causing increases in commodity prices and higher competition over scarce resources and jobs. Mitigating these risks requires in-depth conflict analysis and monitoring of conflict indicators throughout the life of a programme, making adaptations to design and implementation as necessary.

***Flexibility:*** The impact of the Syria conflict in the sub-region is dynamic – with sudden increases in refugee outflows and an increasing spill over of violence into neighbouring countries. The dynamic nature of this situation requires a flexible aid response that can quickly scale up or scale down and can be constantly adapted to ensure diverse needs are effectively addressed. In practice, traditional donors, UN agencies and international NGOs have rigid programming, administrative and financial frameworks that do not generally facilitate the degree of flexibility required in this response. Instituting a flexible approach would require regular rigorous but quick reviews that inform changes or adaptations to, or expansion of, project activities or modalities. Multi-year and diversified funding (including non traditional donors, private sector or social investment funds) with simplified accountability and reporting requirements are essential to facilitate a more flexible programming approach.

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<sup>9</sup> Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, “Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace building: Resource Pack”.

## Innovation

Innovation in international aid can perhaps be broadly understood as: *“a dynamic, managed process, which focuses on the creation and implementation of new or improved tools and approaches. Successful innovations are those that result in improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, quality or social outcomes and impacts”*<sup>10</sup>. Recent policy discussions on this concept suggest four key types of innovation:

1. **“Product innovation”** – changes in the products and/or services that an organization offers;
2. **“Process innovation”** – changes in the ways products and services are designed or delivered;
3. **“Position innovation”** – changes in how products/services are framed and communicated; and
4. **“Paradigm innovation”** – changes in the underlying models which shape what an organization does<sup>11</sup>.

Defining ‘innovation’ in this way includes programming practices that are ‘incrementally’ innovative (i.e. that bring small-scale but important improvements to a programme or response over time) and programming practices that are major ‘breakthroughs’ to long-standing or significant problems (i.e. whole new models that may be disruptive to standard practice or modes of operation).

The unprecedented scale and scope of this crisis, the increasing disparity between declining external funding and escalating needs, the wealth of national and local capacities and the prevalence of new technologies in the region are all driving innovation in many areas of programming, as evidenced in the chapters below. Enabling innovation is, however, extremely challenging. It requires a high degree of flexibility in funding and programming approaches, which, as noted, above is not an easy concept for many aid actors. The risks of innovation are greater in emergency contexts when the consequences of failure are extremely serious. Innovation in protracted contexts may be easier but still requires difficult trade-offs. Exploiting to the full the opportunities to innovate in this sub-region - to pilot new or improved approaches and activities - will require a significant shift in thinking from international organisations and donors alike.

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<sup>10</sup> World Humanitarian Summit (2014b), “Approach Paper - WHS Theme 3: Transformation through Innovation”.

<sup>11</sup> ALNAP (2009b), “Innovations in International Humanitarian Action: Background Paper”.

Thankfully, the initiatives in this compendium demonstrate that breakthrough innovation is possible and necessary under challenging circumstances. The successful examples had a clear goal, purpose or intention and found ways to truly understand the needs of the beneficiaries as demonstrated in the Danish Refugee Council's local community centres initiative. They built support for their innovation and understood the resistance to change as seen in the Mercy Corps' Community Action Groups. Some took time to step back, reflect and see the big picture – and develop mutual understanding and trust with partners as experienced in the UN-Habitat programme in Lebanon. They adapted to changing situations and tested prototypes despite funding challenges – holding their long-term objectives while finding short-term solutions as the Information Management and Analysis Support (IMAS) Initiative demonstrated. They took multi-stakeholder collaboration to a new level and developed solid partnerships – drawing on the strengths and diverse perspectives of all partners and creating aligned, independent action toward a shared vision as the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) so aptly modeled.

Drawing on the many resources available for public sector innovation such as those provided by Nesta in the UK; Mindlab in Denmark; UNICEF's innovation principles; UNDP's innovation facility and network of innovators; UNHCR's innovation model and Refugee Innovation Centres and others these initiatives have made bold advances. This compendium is the UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat's first step toward raising the visibility of innovations so ideas can spread, so innovators can connect to learn from each other and so as a network we can facilitate paradigm shifts in the response to this complex crisis. By working in a concerted way across the region, the imagination and persistence of individuals, agencies and partners can spark transformation on a large scale and lead to a stable, peaceful and prosperous region.







# Promoting Social Cohesion

## Principles

- Community-based approach, participation

## Projects

- **3.1** Mercy Corps' Community Action Groups in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon: Building local capacities for conflict management
- **3.2** Danish Refugee Council's local community centres in Turkey: Creating a safe and protective space for community interaction
- **3.3** ACTED-REACH's neighbourhood-based support in Jordan and Lebanon: Integrating conflict sensitive approaches in needs assessments and responses
- **3.4** UNDP and UN-Habitat programme to improve living conditions in Palestine refugee gatherings in Lebanon: Promoting community ownership of and responsibility for local services and solutions

## Background

The number of refugees seeking refuge among and near to host communities has risen dramatically over the last four years. The rapid influx into areas that were home to some of the poorest and most vulnerable local populations has placed significant strain on lower-end housing and labour markets and vastly increased pressure on public and municipal services. The competition over access to services, jobs and housing between refugees and their host communities has become a source of tension<sup>12</sup>. The broader political and

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<sup>12</sup> See for example, REACH (2014a), "Evaluating the Effect of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Stability and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities: Preliminary Impact Assessment"; REACH (2014b), "Informing Targeted Host Community Programming in Lebanon: Secondary Data Review"; Oxfam (2013), "Integrated Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Host Communities: Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; Protection"; and UNDP/UNDG, (2014), "The Syrian Crisis – Tracking and Tackling Impacts on Sustainable Human Development in Neighbouring Countries: Insights from Lebanon and Jordan".

economic impact of the on-going conflict inside Syria and its spill over effects across the region are also fuelling negative perceptions of refugees in host countries.

Mitigating these tensions and preventing local conflict is crucial to ensuring the physical, material and legal protection of refugees, many of whom are extremely vulnerable. It is also critical to human security of all affected populations in the sub-region and to maintaining stability and protecting development gains. International organisations are prioritising efforts to promote social cohesion: through targeted social cohesion programmes, such as developing local conflict management mechanisms and capacities; and through addressing the sources of tensions through sectoral interventions, such as increasing the stock of affordable housing for refugees and other urban poor.

## Good Practice Principles and Innovative Approaches

Promoting social cohesion is one of the overarching objectives of the aid response in the sub-region. As such, many of the good practice principles for social cohesion programmes are also relevant across the spectrum of other sectoral interventions. Key principles include:

**Community-Based Approach:** Working in *partnership* with affected communities in the assessment, design and implementation of responses to their needs is, in large part, the operationalization of the human rights-based approach. Adopting a community-based approach means “*recognising the resilience, capacities, skills and resources of persons of concern and building on these to deliver protection and solutions, and support[ing] the community’s own goals*”<sup>13</sup>. In this context, ensuring that communities – both refugees and their host communities – are not just ‘involved’ in but are actually *driving* the response is critical to its effectiveness in the immediate term and to more sustainable outcomes. Aid actors must recognise the limitations on their capacities and resources to deal with this protracted crisis, the temporary nature of the international aid response and, crucially, that the largely middle-income, highly literate<sup>14</sup> and highly skilled refugee and host populations generally have capacity to identify their problems and appropriate solutions. International aid actors can play a crucial *facilitation* role by augmenting these capacities and providing support to enable affected communities to prevent

13 UNHCR (2008), “A Community-Based Approach in UNHCR Operations”, p. 14.

14 For example, in 2008-2012, youth (age 15-24 years) literacy rates for females and males in Jordan were 99.3% and 99.1%; in Lebanon were 99.1% and 98.4%; in Turkey were 97.9% and 99.4%; in Syria were 94.1% and 96.4%; in Egypt were 86.1% and 92.4%; and in Iraq were 80.5% and 84.1%. Statistics available from [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

social problems or tensions from arising and addressing them when they do. Community-based approaches can also help to re-establish social systems or structures that have been disrupted by displacement or crisis and, as a result, can enhance dignity and a sense of ownership among communities<sup>15</sup>. This, in turn, is critical to mitigate the sense of being under threat that can fuel tensions.

Adopting a community-based approach requires an in-depth understanding of local power dynamics, social, cultural, political and economic factors, as well as of the needs and capacities of local institutions and systems. To be truly *community-driven*, a programme must be designed by the communities concerned and aimed at addressing the priorities that they, rather than external actors, determine. This demands a high degree of financial and programmatic flexibility.

**Participation:** Ensuring the meaningful participation of different community members in the assessment, design and implementation of aid programmes is integral to a community-based or community-driven approach. Participation helps ensure that programmes are effective in prioritising and addressing needs (i.e. those that households and communities determine are most important) and, in this context, the interaction it requires between refugees and host populations can help foster mutual understanding and trust. Interaction with representatives of affected communities is also important to understand their intentions and their aspirations<sup>16</sup>, as well as to more accurately identify and assess the potential or actual sources of community tensions.

Adopting a participatory approach means regularly bringing together representatives of local communities in focus group discussions, forums or other mechanisms to discuss issues affecting them and negotiate appropriate solutions. Achieving appropriate gender, age, religious and ethnic diversity in the representation of local communities is central to the effectiveness of such mechanisms and processes. In the highly complex political-social environments in this sub-region, it is also important to include representation of differing *agendas* and *interests* through ensuring institutional diversity (e.g. a range of local institutions, public or government actors such as municipal and district authorities, line ministries, parastatal service providers), civil society diversity (e.g. community-based organisations, youth groups, women's groups), public-private sector diversity (e.g. representation of local private as

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15 UNHCR (2008), "A Community-Based Approach in UNHCR Operations".

16 UNHCR (2014a), "UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps".

well as public sector actors), political diversity (e.g. local political agendas and interests), and socio-economic diversity (e.g. ensuring representation of poor, middle and higher income groups where appropriate)<sup>17</sup>.

Achieving this degree of diversity is challenging and there are a number of risks inherent in undertaking participatory approaches. Bringing communities together may exacerbate inter-community tensions; traditional community leaders may feel threatened or undermined; representatives may not actually be truly 'representative' and the group may be dominated by community elites; or host communities may not wish to engage with refugee communities. In addition, many social cohesion programmes include supporting communities' engagement in local government planning and decision-making processes. In these cases, it will be important to manage refugees' expectations since the decision-making prerogative will invariably be given to host communities.

Key lessons learnt in recent years, as highlighted by the Social Cohesion Working Group in Lebanon, include assessing all risks and sensitivities beforehand and instituting appropriate mitigation measures; establishing good relations with communities prior to commencing any programmes, preferably through building upon pre-crisis relationships or partnerships that international or national actors may have in a local area; using existing social or community structures or groups (e.g. community leadership structures, religious organisations); continuously monitoring local power dynamics and adapting representation to ensure the most vulnerable or marginalised are adequately represented; and taking into account any relevant practical factors which may impede participation of particular groups (e.g. appropriate locations and timings of meetings). Outlining the responsibilities of representatives, the procedures and standards to be upheld, and creating an environment of mutual respect and trust in which all views can be shared and heard safely, are key to participatory approaches.

There are a large number of programmes currently being implemented across the region to promote social cohesion. The following examples illustrate how some of the elements of good practice discussed above can be incorporated into social cohesion and other sectoral programmes.

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the "Draft Guidelines on Local Participatory Processes" developed by the Social Cohesion Sector Working Group in Lebanon.

# 3.1

## Mercy Corps' Community Action Groups in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon: *Building local capacities for conflict management*



### Objectives

Create community-based conflict management mechanisms to reduce the propensity for violence between communities, improve community perceptions, and facilitate communities and local government working together to implement social service projects that address increasing needs.



### Project Description

This regional programme originated in Mercy Corps' conflict management programme in Iraq (started in 2007) and has evolved in the current crisis. The model focuses on 'interest-based negotiation' and incorporates mediation and non-violent communication as tools to peacefully resolve violent disputes. It aims to build skills of community leaders to be agents of change in their communities – with a particular focus on their role in mitigating risks of local conflict between refugee and host communities. Communities are identified through a comprehensive assessment of tensions and risks of violence and are then sensitized from the outset as to their responsibilities in the programme. Community leaders or representatives are identified through a process involving local community nominations, self-selection, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Representatives are provided with training in interest-based negotiation and other conflict management tools and supported to establish informal local conflict management mechanisms to identify and address conflict risks prevalent in their area. These mechanisms meet regularly and can also undertake quick coordinated action in response to emerging tensions. The programme is intentionally flexible - the processes and training methodology are adapted to each national and local context to ensure they are culturally relevant. In Jordan and Lebanon specifically, the community representatives, in cooperation with local authorities, use the mechanisms to design and implement projects that improve municipal or basic urban services and increase positive social interaction between host and refugee communities. Mercy Corps provides grants and/or technical support

to implementation of the projects identified, which range in scope, size and value (e.g. up to USD \$300,000 in Jordan). Since 2007, the conflict management mechanisms established through the programme have mediated 959 local conflicts and implemented 1,749 community projects mostly in Iraq but also in Jordan and Lebanon.

### Good Practice

Community representatives utilize their conflict management skills to assess and understand local needs and reframe zero-sum competition over resources into concrete local projects that benefit all groups. In this way, the programme has evolved into a community-led, aid-empowered, conflict sensitive approach to local development more broadly. It builds on existing local community structures, such as social, religious or other groups rather than creating entirely new structures. Getting commitment and buy-in from local actors before the programme starts is key to its success and its sustainability. The programme has also built and continues to draw upon regional conflict management expertise: the mediators the programme trained in Iraq have formed their own NGO – the Iraqi Centre for Conflict Management - which now outsources trainers for implementation of the programme across the region.



### Innovation

The programme represents both product and process innovation. It has adapted globally recognized academic methodologies for negotiation and mediation to develop a conflict management tool that is socially and culturally relevant in this sub-region. It has improved upon approaches to identify, select and mobilize community representatives that are both respected by their communities and trusted in this role, as well as ensuring equal participation of women and other marginalized groups. Perhaps uniquely, the programme has successfully built regional capacity on conflict management techniques that is being used in this current crisis.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

Scaling up the existing programme across the region could involve increasing the size and length (e.g. 2-3 years) of grants available for community projects – enabling more sustainable, larger scale and higher impact infrastructure projects. Key elements to consider in replicating this approach in the sub-region, include building locally driven and managed conflict management mechanisms and empowering them through provision of grants or other resources to implement concrete activities which benefit all local actors and reinforce social cohesion. Transition of this model to government leadership is possible, with technical and, possibly, financial support from external actors.





### Resources required

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Qualified national staff are required to understand local social and political dynamics, and conduct detailed assessments of conflict risks in a local area. National or regionally engaged staff is key to providing training in culturally and socially relevant conflict management techniques. Multi-year funding is required to facilitate implementation of a broad scope of projects.



### Expected challenges and risks

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Host communities may refuse to work with Syrian refugees; communities might select 'traditional' leaders as representatives and marginalize vulnerable groups; host and refugee community representatives may not consult their communities. The dynamic political and security environment across the region may also pose serious risks to any type of social cohesion activity.



### Risk mitigation measures

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It will be important to articulate clearly, at the beginning of the programme, the role and expectations of community representatives and local government and to make provision of funding for projects contingent on outputs of their commitments. Specific methodologies are required to ensure selection of community members who are actually 'representative' and these representatives should be formally obliged to verbally report on consultations with their communities. Procedures for expulsion of non-compliant community representatives should be put in place and clearly communicated to all.

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## Danish Refugee Council's (DRC) local community centres in Turkey: *Creating a safe and protective space for community interaction*

3.2



**PARTNERSHIPS:** Turkish NGO,  
International Middle East Peace  
Research Centre

### Objectives

Provide integrated and tailored responses to address needs of both refugee and host communities through direct assistance and the reinforcement of local capacities.



### Project Description

The project has established two community centres in areas hosting large numbers of refugees – one in Hatay province supported directly by DRC and one in Şanlıurfa supported in cooperation with IMPR. The centres are used to deliver a variety of activities and services targeting refugees and host communities, including psychosocial support, life skills programmes and legal information and counselling. The psychosocial programme revolves around structured and semi-structured activities, including an arts-based curriculum specifically designed for children, and providing a safe space for men and women to share stories and solutions to the stresses they are experiencing. The life skills programmes focus on strengthening the capacities of individuals, families and communities to manage the psychosocial impact of displacement and enhancing practical skills such as problem solving, communication, computer skills and languages (with regard to refugees these programmes are also designed to enhance capacities for eventual return to Syria). The legal information and counselling programme provides basic legal advice on rental agreements, registration with AFAD (the Turkish Government body for refugee registration), obtaining a work permit and the process of opening small businesses, registering marriage and births and other family law. DRC and IMPR established a community centre committee in Hatay to ensure more effective representation and participation of the users of the centres in the design and management of services offered. DRC aims, in the long-term, to embed the centres in existing structures or local NGOs so that they become self-sustaining.





### Good Practice

The programme, based on similar approaches adopted in the Balkans conflict, has proven effective in combining psychosocial support with skills training and information services. User feedback on the programme has highlighted the value of a physical space in which refugees and their host communities feel safe and can access practical as well as emotional support – both from experts and from each other; the particular added value of psychosocial support programmes for men who are rarely targeted for this kind of assistance; and that the Turkish language training for refugees has enabled them to more effectively integrate into their host communities and helped develop a sense of independence, self-sufficiency and empowerment. Targeted outreach to Turkish as well as refugee communities in the local area has been key to utilising the centres as a channel for promoting social cohesion – with Turkish communities also benefiting from the range of training and practical support on offer (up to 10% of the users are from host communities and efforts are underway to increase this). The centres represent a physical space in which the different communities can interact socially, thereby fostering greater mutual understanding and trust. The interaction of refugees and host populations with centre staff is also proving a valuable source of information on the protection threats which vulnerable refugees are facing in these areas.



### Innovation

The concept behind this programme is not new in crisis settings but the creation of a physical space that combines psycho-social support and practical skills training and information services is proving to be an effective model in this highly urbanised context. Providing services and activities that are relevant for host communities as well as refugees is also a process innovation.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The programme is currently being scaled up in Turkey, with the aim of establishing two new centres. The concept is also highly replicable across the sub-region – particularly in urban areas – and DRC has similar programmes in Lebanon and Iraq. Key lessons learnt include the importance of reaching out to communities to make them aware of the centre and its services; varying the types of services and programmes on offer to ensure they are tailored to the needs of local communities; and linking with other national and international service providers in the area to enhance coherence.

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### Resources required

Technical staff are required to provide the specialised services offered and the basic running costs of each of the current centres is approximately USD \$10,000 per month.



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### Expected challenges and risks

There may be limited numbers of national NGOs with whom to partner in some areas; host populations may be reluctant participate in the activities of the centre.



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### Risk mitigation measures

Strengthening outreach and ensuring a programme of activities that are directly relevant and useful for refugees and host communities will encourage them to use the centres.



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# 3.3

## ACTED - REACH's neighbourhood-based support in Jordan and Lebanon: *Integrating conflict sensitive approaches in needs assessments and responses*



### Objectives



Integrate comprehensive assessment of vulnerabilities, conflict risks, sources of tension between refugee and host communities with corresponding area-based, community-tailored activities aimed at addressing needs in a way that promotes social cohesion.

### Project Description



The programme follows two steps. Step 1 (assessment): REACH conducts a detailed and participatory assessment in the national context aimed at mapping vulnerabilities and/or sources of tensions in at-risk communities. The assessment methodology involves preliminary mapping of areas of high refugee influx and identification of those with heightened risks of or actual tensions, overlaid with multi-faceted vulnerability indicators including demographics, access to services and income. In the Jordan project, key informant interviews were conducted in 446 communities across six northern governorates affected by refugee inflows, to identify 160 communities particularly at risk of tensions due to their comparatively low resilience and high refugee numbers. More than 7,000 individual questionnaires and 1,200 focus group discussions were conducted in these high-risk communities to identify factors fuelling tensions. Engagement with governmental authorities is embedded throughout the assessment process, with line ministries participating in a steering committee for the project and local authorities interviewed as key informants and participating in governorate-level workshops. Step 2 (response): Building on the assessment findings (complemented with ACTED monitoring and evaluation data), ACTED facilitates a multi-stakeholder joint planning process with local authorities and communities, producing tailored community-level response strategies for each assessed area. Activities included in the strategies aim to address the specific sources of tension identified, e.g. upgrading of essential infrastructure.

In cases where the activities needed are outside ACTED's area of expertise, a referral is made to specialized UN agencies or INGOs for their action. Each local response strategy is focused on building the capacity of local authorities and communities to maintain or manage this process in the longer-term – with shorter term expertise and resources provided by ACTED. ACTED evaluates the quantitative outputs (e.g. the operational projects or activities) and qualitative impact relating to social cohesion – using the REACH data as a baseline.

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### Good Practice

This programme includes key elements of conflict-sensitive approaches: using assessments of sources of tension/risk of conflict to 1). formulate response strategies that specifically address the factors fuelling tensions, and 2). to evaluate the qualitative outcomes of the strategies. Engagement with, and capacity building of, the communities and local authorities in the design and implementation of activities ensures greater local ownership and increases the sustainability of programme outcomes.



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### Innovation

The assessment methodology is not new per se but undertaking such a large-scale assessment of the risk of conflict, sources of tension and multi-faceted vulnerability in at-risk communities and using this as the basis for response strategies is a process innovation. Use of smart mobile technology in the assessment phase increased accuracy of data, reduced scope for interpretation and reduced time and costs.



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### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The assessment methodology and response strategies are intentionally flexible and therefore replicable. Further scaling up or replication of this programme might include: increased coordination with specialized organisations to ensure a broad spectrum of project activities are possible; and undertaking more regular evaluations to facilitate more accurate measurement of outcomes over time, including in relation to strengthening resilience. Increasing the scale of, and financing available for, activities in the response strategies may support longer-term local development efforts. Engagement with the central and local authorities is essential to this process - to encourage buy-in and ownership of the results of assessments (i.e. so that they are accepted and used to inform governmental policies and approaches) and to ensure sustainability of outcomes of response strategies.





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### Resources required

The assessment process requires dedicated staff trained in the methodology and data collection process. Development of response strategies that are appropriate and relevant to a local area requires staff members that have effective relationships with local communities and authorities. The costs required for the assessment process are dependent on the scope of the assessment and the number of focus group discussion and stakeholder interviews required. Flexible funding is required to facilitate a range of project activities relevant to each local context.



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### Expected challenges and risks

Engagement with at-risk communities may inadvertently exacerbate rather than mitigate tensions.



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### Risk mitigation measures

A detailed risk assessment prior to programme commencement; recruitment of dedicated staff with detailed knowledge of local social, political, ethnic and religious dynamics; consistent engagement with all local stakeholders; and carefully moderated focus group discussions and sensitively worded questionnaires may help mitigate the risk that interventions exacerbate tensions.

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UNDP and UN-Habitat programme to improve living conditions in Palestine refugee gatherings in Lebanon: *Promoting community ownership and responsibility for local services and solutions*



### Objectives

1) Addressing poor living conditions in informal Palestine refugee gatherings that have been exacerbated by arrival of refugees from Syria, through improving basic urban services and shelter; 2) Promoting enhanced coordination between local actors to address common challenges; and 3) Reducing community conflicts and tensions by ensuring more equitable service provision. This project builds upon a pre-crisis programme that aimed to improve the living conditions in these informal gatherings for their long-standing inhabitants.



### Project Description

UNDP and UN-Habitat conducted assessments in 42 informal (i.e. they are not official UNRWA-administered camps) Palestine refugee gatherings where 26,000 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) and 4,000 Syrian refugees have sought refuge amongst 140,000 Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) who have lived in these gatherings for decades. With little or no services provided by local authorities and falling outside UNRWA's mandate, these communities are some of the most vulnerable in Lebanon. The assessment methodology included conducting field visits and consultative meetings with resident popular committees and local CBOs and NGOs working in the area, as well as community representatives (e.g. women, youth) in each gathering and the relevant municipal authorities. Consultations were used to assess needs and identify and prioritise small-scale infrastructure projects in response. Consultations were used to raise awareness of the communities' responsibilities for maintaining services and standards, and with regards to maintaining positive relations with neighbours. As at mid-2014, 58 small scale infrastructure projects had been implemented in 23 gatherings and 7 nearby



locations, benefiting some 40,000 PRL, 16,000 refugees from Syria (90% PRS) and 8,500 Lebanese. Projects included upgrading water and sewage networks, storm drainage and roads, regulating electricity connections, hygiene promotion as well as upgrading or weatherproofing housing units (330 by mid-2014) of recently arrived refugees. In some cases, local Lebanese were hired as labourers to do the infrastructure work. The project provided grants to six municipalities to enable them to implement the work directly.



### Good Practice

Residents of these gatherings have illegally established ad-hoc electricity, water, sewerage connections to, and deposited waste, in nearby Lebanese neighbourhoods – in large part because they did not have direct access to such services. This has become a key source of conflict and tensions between the two groups. Addressing this through a participatory consultation with all communities has been key to emphasizing peaceful co-existence and building a sense of responsibility and ownership by the community members, including for the infrastructure projects being implemented in their immediate area. The project aimed to build trust in local authorities by encouraging and empowering them to extend or upgrade basic urban services to the benefit of all local communities, which has also supported longer-term peace-building objectives. Noting the historical political sensitivities surrounding the Palestine refugee population in Lebanon, engagement with local actors on practical solutions to immediate needs has been combined with national level policy dialogue and coordination with relevant ministries and institutions, in collaboration with UNRWA.



### Innovation

The project reflects a process innovation in emphasizing the ‘responsibilities’ of communities for their own environment, services and for peaceful co-existence. It also represents an innovative approach to tackling a long-standing politically and socially sensitive issue in Lebanon– through coordinated operational and policy level activities.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

Scaling up this project across Lebanon (i.e. expanding the number of gatherings which are targeted and increasing the scale of the infrastructure work funded through this project) could enhance short-term social cohesion and longer-term peace-building dividends. Promoting good governance and citizenship is important across the sub-region and lessons learnt from this example are highly relevant for the sub-regional refugee response. These include: instilling

a sense of responsibility among refugee and host communities for peaceful co-existence can alter negative behaviour patterns over the longer-term; combining this with tangible benefits from activities such as upgrading basic infrastructure is likely to secure more sustainable impact; empowering, as well as encouraging, national and local government to deliver is essential to secure tangible social cohesion and good governance outcomes.

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### Resources required

Dedicated staff, interacting constantly with all local actors, is essential to build the confidence of communities that is necessary to ensure positive outcomes. Staff will need to be trained in conflict management, negotiation, and coordination skills. In-depth knowledge of local social, cultural and political dynamics is key to informing design and implementation of the programme in each local area.



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### Expected challenges and risks

Relations between local actors required for successful outcomes may be negatively impacted by regional, national or local events or trends. Changing behavioural patterns can be a long process. Grassroots level outcomes may be stymied by lack of national policy change.



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### Risk mitigation measures

Undertaking detailed conflict-sensitive assessments prior to the commencement of this kind of programme and continuing to monitor key indicators are critical to mitigating a range of risks. Engaging the central as well as local authorities is important to secure the long-term political commitments required for policy change. Building trust between communities and programme implementers may help to mitigate the effects of external political events on the programme.



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## Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods

### Principles

- Multi-faceted response, market-driven programmes, participatory approaches, mitigating community tensions, supporting livelihoods for marginalised groups, private sector partnerships, access to finance

### Projects

- **4.1** UNDP's "Establishing and managing your own small business" Programme in Jordan: Supporting resilient livelihoods through micro-enterprises
- **4.2** Danish Refugee Council's job placement scheme in northern Iraq: Building livelihood skills and opportunities for refugees and host populations

### Background

Refugees fleeing from Syria face huge challenges in accessing livelihoods or income-generating activities necessary to support themselves and their families during displacement. Having exhausted what few assets they had been able to bring, many have sought work in the informal or unskilled labour market where they may be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Many of the poor urban and rural communities in host countries already had limited livelihood opportunities due to sluggish economic growth: women and youth had particularly high rates of unemployment in some countries<sup>18</sup>. Now, there may be fewer jobs available in some areas due to the prevailing

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<sup>18</sup> In 2012, youth (15-25 yrs. old) unemployment rates (available and actively seeking work) in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey in 2012 were 31.3%, 22.8%, 32.1%, 35.7% and 17% respectively. Figures from ILO, Key Indicators of the Labor Market Database, accessed at [www.data.worldbank.org/indicator](http://www.data.worldbank.org/indicator).

economic climate and poor host communities face stiff competition<sup>19</sup> from large numbers of refugees who may be prepared to work for lower wages, in less favorable conditions<sup>20</sup>. The impact of the crisis on access to livelihoods of already vulnerable host communities is fuelling tensions between them and incoming refugees.

Facilitating access to safe and sustainable livelihood and other socio-economic opportunities for affected populations, including employment or enterprise, provides multiple benefits: it is key to building the resilience of affected households and reducing their dependency on national or international assistance<sup>21</sup>; increasing self-reliance helps to build a sense of dignity and empowerment and a degree of normalcy, particularly for refugees who have experienced high levels of trauma; income-generating activities can also build or enhance the skills and assets that will be required when refugees eventually return to post-conflict Syria; and implementing comprehensive livelihood support strategies for affected populations that also harness the human capital of refugees can contribute to longer-term development efforts, including through skills transfer, enterprise and private and public sector growth.

The prevailing policy environment in many host countries and the emphasis during the first few years of the international response on emergency assistance has meant there are limited livelihood support programmes. However, increasingly, international organisations are targeting vulnerable host communities and, to the extent possible, refugees with rapid income generating activities, vocational skills training, support to growth of micro, small and medium enterprises, and access to finance.

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19 In Jordan for example, ILO analysis suggests that the economic activity rate of Syrian refugees (48.5 per cent) is higher than Jordanians (36.5 per cent) and that they are working in sectors that are not attractive to Jordanians. See ILO (2014), "The Impact of the Syria Crisis on the Labour Market in Jordan: A Preliminary Analysis". In Lebanon, the impact of the crisis on overall unemployment rates is worrisome: recent research suggests that the unemployment rate could double to 49% of the labour force (including refugees) by the end of 2014. See World Bank and United Nations (2013), "Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon".

20 Even in cases where refugees may be eligible for work permits, they may be unwilling to request their employer to support the process (which incurs a cost to employers) for fear that the offer of employment will be withdrawn.

21 UNDG (2014), "A Resilience-based Development Response to the Syria Crisis: A Position Paper".

## Good Practice Principles and Innovative Approaches

**Multifaceted response:** Good practice in livelihood programming requires a multi-layered response. As per existing guidance from UNDP<sup>22</sup> and UNHCR<sup>23</sup> respectively, comprehensive livelihood strategies should combine activities aimed at ‘provision’ of livelihoods (such as cash-for-work or other emergency socio-economic activities), ‘protecting’ livelihoods (activities aimed at helping households recover assets and adapt to a new livelihood environment, such as skills development), and ‘promoting’ livelihoods through advocating appropriate policy and legal frameworks that support the right to work and promote safe working conditions. In this complex regional crisis, particular emphasis is required on working with national authorities and institutions to help find appropriate legal, policy and practical solutions that support safe and sustainable livelihoods or socio-economic opportunities for all affected populations<sup>24</sup>.

**Market-driven programmes:** Conducting in-depth analyses of local markets, including labour markets and growth sectors, is essential to inform market-driven livelihood strategies. Matching the skills and capacities of affected populations to local market conditions is necessary to facilitate more sustainable livelihoods and market assessments should also be used to inform design of emergency income-generating activities.

**Participatory approaches:** Facilitating the participation of affected communities throughout the programme cycle is critical to understanding the social, cultural, political or practical challenges they may face in accessing and maintaining livelihoods and to make programmatic adjustments to help overcome them. Building on methodologies outlined in Chapter 3, participatory approaches for livelihood or income-generating programmes could focus additionally on engaging local private sector actors and on mapping the skills and knowledge prevalent in a targeted community and the aspirations they have regarding employment or entrepreneurial activities.

**Mitigating community tensions:** Providing support for livelihoods or income-generating activities for host communities and refugees is key to mitigating tensions arising from competition over employment. With due regard for national policy and legal frameworks and based on appropriate needs and

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22 See for example, UNDP (2013), “Guide on Livelihoods and Economic Recovery in Crisis Situations”.

23 See for example, UNHCR (2011), “Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas” and UNHCR (2012), “Livelihood Programming in UNHCR: Operational Guidelines”.

24 It is important to note however that economic growth in some parts of the region is not necessarily generating growth in jobs.

market assessments, this may mean allocating a proportional percentage of places on a vocational training or socio-economic programme to both refugees and host communities, or implementing complementary programmes that are tailored for the different communities and their circumstances. It will also be important to counter the perception many host populations have that their access to employment has been undermined by the influx of refugees. Although economic data does not necessarily corroborate this perception<sup>25</sup>, strengthening outreach with and sensitisation of all local actors to programme objectives and intended outcomes is necessary to address these concerns.

**Supporting livelihoods for marginalised groups:** Women, youth and other vulnerable groups across the region face particular challenges in accessing livelihoods<sup>26</sup>. Understanding the practical or social constraints they face and adapting livelihood or socio-economic strategies accordingly is necessary to help overcome these challenges. For example, a UNDP initiative in rural Jordan is focused specifically on enabling women from more conservative communities to access work close to their homes and villages and work hours that are compatible with their domestic responsibilities.

**Private sector partnerships:** As evidenced in recent studies<sup>27</sup>, the private sector can and is acting as an employer, a facilitator, a mentor and an investor in the response to this regional crisis – driven by both commercial and philanthropic interests. Capitalising on the capacities of this vibrant and highly motivated private sector to generate livelihoods for affected populations means understanding their motivations and recognising the diverse roles that they can play. Developing strong partnerships with individual companies, chambers of commerce or other institutions will be essential in this regard.

**Access to finance:** Increasing access to finance, including micro-finance programmes, can enable households and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to expand their activities, increase their income or revenues and build economic self-reliance. Micro-finance can be converted into other assets such as skills, land, livestock, or equipment necessary to support specific income-generating activities. UNRWA's long-standing micro-finance programme in the region offers important lessons and good practices that

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25 An analysis conducted by ILO in Jordan in 2013 indicated that unemployment rates in governorates hosting the largest number of refugees had not increased from pre-crisis levels. See ILO (2014), "The Impact of the Syrian Crisis on the Labour Market in Jordan: A Preliminary Analysis".

26 For example, a Multi-Sector Needs Assessment conducted by REACH in northern Iraq indicated that only 18% of female members of non-camp refugee households are earning an income. See REACH (2014c), "Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment for Syrian Refugees Outside Camps: Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Assessment Report, September 2014".

27 See for example, Zyck, S. and Armstrong, J., (2014), "Humanitarian Crises, Emergency Preparedness and Response: The Role of Business and the Private Sector – Jordan Case Study".

could facilitate expanded access to finance for households and businesses affected by the current crisis, including: tailoring programmes to different groups (e.g. women, youth) and for different uses (education, housing as well as small business development); providing support to development of business plans; engaging private sector partners; ensuring access for both refugees and host populations<sup>28</sup>; and mitigating risks that access to finance may increase indebtedness – a long problem for many refugees in the sub-region<sup>29</sup>.

The following projects illustrate some of these good practice principles.



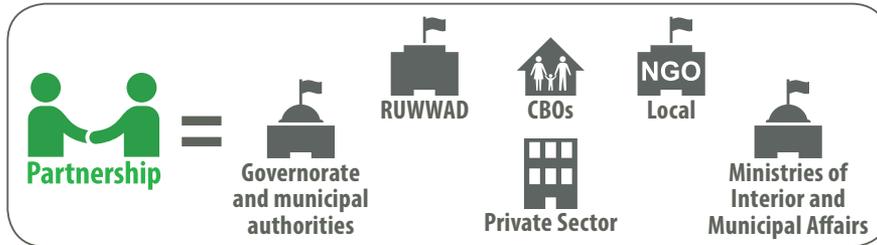
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28 UNRWA's micro-finance programme began in 1991 in Gaza and subsequently expanded to three other areas of operation, including Jordan in 2003 where it currently constitutes approximately 4% of the micro-finance market. Eligibility requirements include owning a business already or having a Jordanian act as guarantor for the loan. In Jordan, an estimated 40% of beneficiaries of the programme are Palestine refugees with the remaining 60% made up of Jordanians and other nationalities others. More information is available at [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org).

29 Recent research in Jordan for example indicates that the average refugee household has an income-expenditure gap of JOD 107. See CARE International (2014), "Live Unseen: Urban Syrian Refugees and Jordanian Host Communities Three Years Into the Syrian Crisis". Recent research in Jordan for example indicates that the average refugee household has an income-expenditure gap of JOD 107. See CARE International (2014), "Live Unseen: Urban Syrian Refugees and Jordanian Host Communities Three Years Into the Syrian Crisis".

## UNDP's "Establishing and managing your own small business" Programme in Jordan: *Supporting resilient livelihoods through micro-enterprises*

# 4.1



### Objectives

Support sustainable livelihoods creation for Jordanian host communities through establishment and development of micro-businesses.



### Project Description

This programme uses a multi-layered approach to supporting individuals to develop their business ideas into viable, profitable micro-enterprises. Beneficiaries are selected through community outreach in collaboration with local CBOs; beneficiaries must be 18 to 40 years old and be unemployed. In phase 1, training is provided on business planning and other entrepreneurial skills to enable individuals to develop their ideas into a concrete business plan. In phase 2, the plans produced during training are presented to a panel of private sector actors who assess which of them could be developed into a viable business, given local market conditions. UNDP, government representatives and the donor are observers on this panel. Beneficiaries whose plans are selected for investment are provided with 6,000 JOD (approx. USD 8,400), comprised of approximately 80% grant administered by UNDP and 20% investment loan from a private sector investor from the panel. The private sector investor also acts as a mentor to the beneficiary, providing commercial advice and guidance on financial management, legal administration, marketing and other key aspects of business development for at least two years. The loan is provided on flexible terms but must be repaid within ten years and each micro-business must aim to create three jobs in the local area. The programme initially targeted host communities in Mafraq and Irbid but has since been expanded to six other governorates where it focuses



on youth (18-35 yrs.). The programme has supported creation of a range of micro-businesses including: carpet cleaning services, an educational centre, diaper production from factory off-cuts, and a catering business.



### Good Practice

The engagement of the private sector from the outset of the programme as investor and mentor is key to successful outcomes for beneficiaries. Using beneficiary criteria to prioritise support to individuals with adequate literacy, commercial acumen and motivation, and basing investment decisions on assessment of commercial viability and detailed knowledge of local market conditions, together help to ensure that businesses created have a greater chance of success. The high degree of flexibility the programme offers beneficiaries – they design their own businesses – ensures that it is relevant and adaptable to the needs of different groups, as evidenced in the high proportion of women beneficiaries (40%). The programme offers a long-term approach with a focus on creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for participants and their communities.



### Innovation

This micro-business approach is not a new idea per se but the heavy involvement of the private sector throughout the project, particularly in mentoring small businesses and investing their own capital, is an important process innovation. The high degree of flexibility in the livelihoods being generated is also an innovative way to achieve better outcomes for women and other vulnerable groups.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

Further expansion of the programme in Jordan, including increasing its sustainability, requires gradually handing over the programme to a national institution that can facilitate the on-going partnership with the private sector and increasing the funding available for loans/grants. There is significant potential to replicate this approach across the sub-region and to build in contextual adaptations such as tailored training and entrepreneurial skills development for specific groups (e.g. youth), and for different local economic markets. Partnerships with the private sector will vary from context to context but their active participation is central to the success of this type of programme. The role of the national and local authorities in supporting local business development is key - through raising awareness of local legal and

administrative frameworks for small businesses, creating a favourable policy environment and supporting private sector investments. The role of quasi-commercial or commercial institutions such as chambers of commerce is key to encouraging private sector partnerships, analysing local markets and identifying policy or legal changes necessary to better support business development.

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### Resources required

Initial funding is required for the training courses (which require qualified trainers) and for the start up grants. Expansion of the programme may include increasing the size and/or number of grants available.



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### Expected challenges and risks

Securing adequate and sustainable investment from, and partnerships with, the private sector is challenging; and fluctuating local market dynamics and limited capacities of beneficiaries are key risks to the long-term success of micro-businesses created.



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### Risk mitigation measures

Undertaking in-depth analysis of local markets and continuing to monitor them throughout the programme can help ensure informed decisions; articulating the long-term nature of the commitment required from the private sector and encouraging local or governmental authorities to take a lead role in the process may mitigate the risk of drop-out by private sector partners; and maintaining continuous professional support and mentoring from private sector sponsors for the micro-businesses can mitigate the risk of business failure.



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# 4.2

Danish Refugee Council's (DRC) job placement scheme in northern Iraq: *Building livelihood skills and opportunities for refugees and host populations*



## Objectives



Mitigate the impact of displacement on vulnerable refugees and host populations by supporting access to livelihood opportunities.

## Project Description



The project combines skills training and job placement, as part of a broader strategy, to support vulnerable refugees and host populations in accessing livelihoods. Programme staff reach out to targeted communities through local authorities, CBOs and community leaders to solicit recommendations for participants of the programme and also receive referrals from other international organisations. DRC staff conduct household level assessments of the individuals recommended to determine their eligibility for the programme based on DRC vulnerability criteria. Prioritisation is given to refugees who have no other source of household income, are from households that have a large number of members or are from households that include individuals with serious medical conditions or disabilities. If individuals recommended cannot be placed on a livelihoods program, they are referred for other DRC support. In collaboration with UNDP, local employers, the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Labour, job training sessions are held to assist the participants in building soft skills for the local labour market, including writing CVs, job interview skills, and knowledge of local job markets. Participants of the training are selected for job placements based on a match of their skills to a willing employer. DRC identified 267 private sector partners willing and able to offer a position for two months. DRC pays the salary for this two-month period and monitors the implementation of a memorandum of understanding signed by the participant and the employer at the outset of the placement.

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## Good Practice

The programme targets both vulnerable refugees and host populations (approximately 70% refugees and 30% host populations), thereby recognising the broader impact of displacement and facilitating positive interaction. The partnerships with local private sector actors are key to helping beneficiaries better understand the local job market and the skills required to access it: the participation of employers in the skills training for example means that they are able to share their views on skills currently in demand and what they are looking for in employees. DRC monitors each job placement for the two-month period as part of its protection approach. Although it is generally a temporary activity, the job placement scheme enables refugees and vulnerable host populations to gain a minimum level of practical experience in a particular sector and provides them with a crucial opportunity to demonstrate their skills to a potential employer. Post-programme monitoring indicates that 70-80% of participants are still employed after the initial two-month period.



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## Innovation

The programme offers a number of process innovations with regards to targeting livelihood support to both refugees and vulnerable host populations, and with respect to the partnerships with local private sector actors in training and awareness-raising activities, and as an employer.



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## Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

There is potential to scale-up this project through increasing the number of beneficiaries and maximizing the list of private sector partners identified as willing to participate. Key lessons learnt include: linking training programmes with job fairs or other opportunities to mobilize more sustainable job opportunities; building computer knowledge and skills of beneficiaries –skills necessary to access other livelihood support (e.g. language or other skills training, job database) and for certain jobs; and placing particular emphasis on CV writing and job interview skills to enable beneficiaries to market themselves more effectively.





### Resources required

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Qualified staff, including with knowledge of the local private sector, are important to facilitate access to potential employers and partners. Significant funding is required to support the salaries for two months as well as training costs.



### Expected challenges and risks

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Beneficiaries may be unwilling to participate in job placements (or remain in employment if the offer is extended) due to concerns about low salary or cultural appropriateness of the work; matching available jobs to the skills of beneficiaries is complex due to the lack of specific vocational skills of some beneficiaries and the limited availability of jobs.



### Risk mitigation measures

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Sensitisation to the conditions and types of employment opportunities that may arise; ensuring appropriate minimum employment conditions; and increasing access to vocational training, to the internet and to other resources to support the search for employment could increase the chances of long-term employment opportunities.

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## Supporting Sustainable Habitat

### Principles

- Protection approach, integrated approaches, multi-dimensional responses, participation, environmental sustainability

### Projects

- 5.1 Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Integrated Urban Shelter Rehabilitation Programme in Jordan: Enhancing protection of refugees and expanding the stock of affordable housing
- 5.2 UNHCR and NRC's Grey Water Gardening Programme in Zaatari camp, Jordan: Empowering refugees to improve their living environment

### Background

Across the sub-region, the vast majority of refugees have sought shelter among host communities in rural and urban areas - outside camp settings. Finding and maintaining access to safe, affordable shelter is a huge challenge for most of these households and many are living in unfinished buildings, overcrowded and poorly maintained flats, or in very basic shelters or tents. At mid-2014, an estimated 38% of refugees outside camps across the region were believed to be living in over-crowded, inadequate shelters that provide little protection from the elements<sup>30</sup> and few have any security of tenure<sup>31</sup>. As many as 55% of refugees in Lebanon are living in sub-standard conditions, 33% of households in Duhok, Iraq perceive their accommodation to be inadequate<sup>32</sup>, about a quarter of out-of-camp refugees in Turkey live in ruins or makeshift

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30 UNHCR (2014b), "2014 Syria Regional Response Plan Strategic Overview: Mid-Year Update".

31 A recent assessment by NRC Jordan indicated that as many as 70% of refugees outside camps have no security of tenure. See NRC Jordan (2014b), "A Precarious Existence: The Shelter Situation of Refugees from Syria in Neighbouring Countries".

32 REACH (2014c), "Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees Outside Camps: Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Assessment Report".

shelters<sup>33</sup>, and out-of-camp refugees in Jordan report that shelter is their single most pressing concern<sup>34</sup>. For many urban and rural poor host communities, the situation is also bleak. Even prior to the current crisis, affordable housing was a problem in many host countries: in Jordan for example, the housing market faced an annual shortfall of 3,400 housing units in the period 2004 to 2011<sup>35</sup>. The influx of refugees to poor urban communities in host countries has therefore increased competition for already scarce housing and resulted in rapid inflation of rental prices on the open market<sup>36</sup>. This competition between refugees and poor host communities is a key source of tensions.

Across the sub-region, international organisations are pursuing a range of coordinated shelter interventions in camps and non-camp settings aimed at providing “privacy, security, protection from the elements and a sense of home”<sup>37</sup>.

## Good Practice Principles and Innovative Approaches

**Protection approach:** Ensuring protection considerations are fully integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of shelter programmes is integral to ensure housing is safe, secure, sustainable and minimises the range of physical, legal and material risks that refugees may face. Addressing shelter needs through the framework of housing, land and property rights helps focus efforts on increasing security of tenure, which is key to psychosocial well being and strengthening household resilience. Integrating protection in shelter programmes means assessing a range of factors in the local context, including the local housing market, applicable national legal frameworks and the practical, social or cultural challenges that households face in seeking adequate and affordable shelter. These assessments must form the basis of programme design and implementation, ensuring appropriate adjustments for different groups or individual families as necessary. It also means conducting regular and consistent protection monitoring once shelter has been allocated in order to identify and address protection risks as they arise. Integrating protection may also involve providing legal support to address tenant-landlord disputes or mitigate the risk of eviction, and sensitising landlords and other local stakeholders to the shelter needs and rights of refugees.

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33 AFAD (2013), “Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 2013: Field Survey Results”. p. 34.

34 CARE (2014), “Lives Unseen: Urban Syrian Refugees and Jordanian Host Communities Three Years into the Syrian Crisis”.

35 Government of Jordan (2014), “National Resilience Plan 2014 – 2016”.

36 Analysis undertaken by UNHCR in 2013 indicated rent rises in Jordan of approximately 25% in areas with high refugee arrivals. UNHCR/IRD (2014), “Syrian Refugees Living Outside of Camps in Jordan: Home Visit Data Findings 2013”.

37 UNHCR (2014c), “Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter: A UNHCR Strategy – 2014-18”.

***Integrated approaches:*** Many international organisations in the sub-region are integrating shelter with other sectoral interventions such as water and sanitation, and education. Integrating multiple objectives in one programme can better address the complex vulnerabilities that many refugees and other affected households have. For example, Islamic Relief conditions its cash-for-rent assistance for refugees in Jordan with children from the family attending school or, for the vast majority of the children in the project, attending one of the informal education centres that have also been established as part of their project. By supporting the family with cash they need to meet one of their largest and most urgent expenditures – rent, the programme encourages families to take their children out of work and allow them to attend school.

***Multi-dimensional responses:*** The varied physical and policy environments in which refugees have sought shelter and the diversity of their needs necessitate a diversified set of shelter solutions, including cash and in-kind assistance, weather proofing and upgrading individual units and collective centres. For example, cash-for-rent specifically is provided by UNHCR across the region as an emergency intervention for some of the most vulnerable refugees, including in cases of eviction. In Lebanon, UNRWA provides regular cash to Palestine refugees (USD \$100 per family per month), as part of a self-help approach that enables them to determine their preferred shelter options (they can use this to upgrade shelters or for rent). To date, most shelter options have focused on emergency or interim solutions. As the crisis becomes more protracted, finding more sustainable shelter options is increasingly important, despite the policy and financial challenges that this presents. In this regard, UN-Habitat is currently exploring long-term approaches involving investor or mortgage guarantees aimed at stimulating growth and investment in the low-cost housing market that could benefit refugees and poor host populations alike.

***Participation:*** Participation of beneficiaries in programme design is necessary to ensure shelter options are viable – that they enable access to all relevant services (education, health, food), and infrastructure (water and sanitation, electricity, transportation) and take into account relevant gender, social, cultural and political factors. Their participation also helps to ensure that shelter assistance is tailored to the specific circumstances of individual households and their diverse vulnerabilities. Involving host communities in shelter programming may help identify families most in need and solutions that draw on local capacities and resources. Engagement with host communities is also necessary to explain project aims (including prioritisation of those most in need) and mechanisms for redress to avoid fuelling perceptions that refugees are being unfairly prioritized and to minimize cases of abuse. Ensuring participation of local authorities throughout the programme cycle is important to facilitate access to housing stocks and is necessary for legal and policy protection - their engagement in addressing disputes or abuse of the programme is crucial.

**Environmental sustainability:** Even in emergency situations, taking environmental sustainability into consideration in the design of shelter and related programmes is essential to prevent degradation of natural resources and the local environment and to mitigate any environmental risks to vulnerable populations<sup>38</sup>. Any negative impact that refugees may have on local natural resources can be a source of tension with host communities, particularly in a region that has high levels of water scarcity. Assessment of risks posed to and by the local environment prior to commencement of a shelter programme is necessary to design interventions that mitigate risks such as flash flooding, landslides, or pollution of local water sources and agricultural land. In informal settlements in Lebanon for example, UNHCR and partners have distributed weatherproofing kits (plastic sheeting, timber and installation toolkits), and undertaken minimal site improvement activities (e.g. digging ditches for drainage channels, sandbagging around shelter units, leveling, spreading of gravel), aimed at reducing the impact of regular floods in these areas on both refugees and host communities. In a particularly innovative approach to mitigating the negative impact on the environment, a tent-recycling programme has been established by shelter partners in Zaatari camp, Jordan. Tents no longer used by refugees are recycled and re-issued to newly arriving refugees or the component parts used to make furniture or children's toys.

The following examples illustrate a number of good and innovative practices in sustainable shelter programming.



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38 See for example, WWF and American Red Cross (2010), "Green Recovery and Reconstruction Toolkit".

# 5.1

## Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Integrated Urban Shelter Rehabilitation Programme in Jordan: *Enhancing protection of refugees and expanding the stock of affordable housing*



### Objectives



Increase the availability of adequate and affordable shelter in host communities and ensure increased security of tenure for vulnerable Syrian refugees.

### Project Description



NRC is providing financial incentives and technical support to Jordanian landlords in host communities to bring new housing units onto the rental market. In return, vulnerable Syrian refugee families identified by NRC are provided with rent-free accommodation for up to 24 months. The project follows a number of steps: NRC advertises for unfinished buildings in targeted local communities and Jordanian land owners contact them through a hotline; NRC engineering teams visit the properties to determine their suitability and provide a list of works to be undertaken to finish the property or housing unit; conditional payments of up to USD \$2,000 per housing unit are paid to reimburse landlords for work undertaken as agreed; NRC engineers monitor the work and confirm when it is completed; assessment and selection of Syrian refugee families is conducted based on standard vulnerability criteria and referrals from UNHCR/INGOs; a zero-value lease agreement is prepared and signed by landlord and tenants for between 12 to 24 months; case managers from NRC's Information Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) programme conduct outreach visits during the first month and distribute a one-off cash grant to the family to assist with moving in; follow-up visits to both landlord and tenants are conducted every two months for the duration of the lease to identify and help resolve any problems arising, including the risk of eviction. ICLA staff, working in tandem with shelter staff, provide information and counselling on access to essential services and assistance, legal status and

other protection issues and can make referrals for specialised support. The first phase of the project is just being completed and a number of landlords have agreed to extend the no-cost tenancy agreement or to a discounted rent for refugees.

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### Good Practice

The way that protection has been integrated throughout the programme cycle reflects several areas of good practice: NRC worked with local authorities to develop a tenancy agreement that provides enhanced protection; regular protection monitoring is conducted to identify risks and take responsive action; awareness-raising activities for landlords, communities and refugees on housing, land and property rights are conducted; and legal advice and support is provided when specific issues arise. To date, there have been few cases of abuse of the programme by landlords and where this has occurred, the local authorities and judicial system have proven an effective partner in resolving problems – thereby also reinforcing the rule of law and good governance. In value for money terms, this approach may be more costly in the short term but is more effective and more sustainable than other shelter options. It provides vulnerable refugees with adequate housing with a degree of security of tenure that is not available through more temporary shelter options. The programme also has a direct outcome on community tensions by helping individual landlords to invest in their properties and by mitigating the inflation of rental prices and increasing the availability of affordable housing. Evaluations of the programme have led to modifications including working with landlords to find available contractors to speed up implementation of the upgrading work.



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### Innovation

The comprehensive effort to minimize protection risks in design, implementation and monitoring of project is an important process innovation in interim shelter solutions.



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### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

This approach is becoming a key component of shelter responses across the sub-region. Scaling up or replication may involve consideration of varying modalities for different contexts. This interim approach could be linked to longer-term efforts to stimulate private sector investment in large-scale developments of new low-cost housing in urban areas.





### Resources required

The costs of this approach are significant, including grants for upgrading work and costs related to technical engineering and protection staff. Protection monitoring is resource intensive but crucial to mitigate the risks of eviction and other protection concerns. Training monitoring staff in dispute resolution techniques is also an essential investment.



### Expected challenges and risks

Evictions or exploitation by landlords; potential inflationary impact on the local housing market; and fuelling perceptions of poor urban host populations that their needs are neglected in favour of refugees are key risks. There are also risks associated with different modalities of implementation - for example, use of large-scale contractors for upgrading work may reduce the economic benefit to the local area and reduces engagement with the local community; provision of cash direct to landlords so that they can conduct the work carries the risk of fraud.

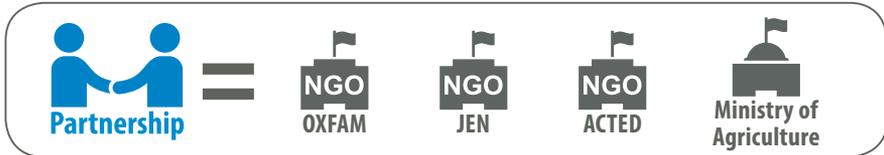


### Risk mitigation measures

Protection risks can be best mitigated by integration of protection assessments, monitoring and responsive actions throughout the programme cycle (including outreach to/sensitisation of host populations); assessment of the specific risks related to different implementing modalities should inform programme design and appropriate mitigating measures put in place before the programme commences, such as strict monitoring of use of funds provided to landlords.

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UNHCR and NRC's Grey Water Gardening Programme in Zaatari camp, Jordan: *Empowering refugees to improve their living environment*



**Objectives**

Reduce grey water in residential areas and promote a healthier, cleaner and greener environment for participating households and communities.



**Project Description**

The project, which started in May 2014, was designed as an interim solution to reduce the amount of grey water (waste water that has not come into contact with faecal matter) in residential areas of Zaatari camp until a long-term sewage system is installed. Reducing grey water is done using a simple sand gravel filtration and vegetative transpiration. Households are approached by the INGO partners and asked if they want to be part of the scheme within a targeted area. The system is explained to them in detail, including the importance of reducing grey water in and around their residential property (reduction of flies, smell, healthier environment), their commitments (households are obliged to do most of the labour and to purchase the kit – 2JD) and their responsibilities to manage the system once it has been established. Households who agree to participate are requested to prepare a filtration hole near their property and are assisted with installation of the pipes and gauze by technical teams. Once the filtration system is installed, non-edible plants and trees provided by the Ministry of Agriculture are planted and a technical team from NRC and community members check the system and add it to the overall grey water project map. The technical teams continue to monitor the system, providing advice and support on maintenance.





### Good Practice

The project is implemented through a community-based approach and using training-of-trainer methodology. It is low-cost but high impact in terms of both reducing prevalence of wastewater in residential areas and in terms of improving the immediate environment for participating households. It empowers households and communities to take responsibility for their immediate environment by giving them the choice to participate, obliging them to provide the initial labour and a small start-up fee, and providing them with advice and support on maintaining the system themselves. The environmental impact is also important and positive – with increased green areas in what is a densely populated residential and commercial space.



### Innovation

The project is relatively innovative in this region - it is a low-tech, low-cost, high impact system addressing a key environmental challenge. The empowerment of households and communities to take responsibility for their immediate environment is an important process innovation.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The project was designed to address a specific problem of waste-water management in Zaatari camp but it also has relevance for other densely populated residential areas - such as the informal settlements in Lebanon or other camps established in Iraq or Turkey. Government roles in such a project may vary depending on locations but overall, the low cost and high impact of this kind of project should appeal to authorities attempting to find quick solutions to sanitation and wastewater management in densely populated areas.

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### Expected challenges and risks

Incorrect implementation of technical kits; supply of incorrect or inappropriate plants; and difficulties in persuading stakeholders to accept such a low-tech solution are key risks.



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### Risk mitigation measures

Consultations with the community and involvement of community members with agricultural skills, thorough training and strong monitoring system may help mitigate the risks in this type of programme.



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# Supporting Sustainable Services

## Principles

- Protection approach, integrated approaches, multi-dimensional responses, participation, environmental sustainability

## Projects

- **6.1** World Vision International's Remedial Education Project in Jordan: Providing accountable remedial education support to vulnerable host and refugee children
- **6.2** UNHCR and UEFA's Zaatari Camp Football League, Jordan: Using sport to enhance psychosocial well-being and health
- **6.3** UNHCR Refugee Helpline in Jordan: Responding quickly and accurately to emergency, protection and information calls
- **6.4.** UNHCR's Refugee Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF): an inter-agency approach to the analysis and targeting of assistance on the basis of refugee household vulnerability

## Background

Accessing quality services for affected populations is becoming a real challenge and the capacity of national service delivery systems are under increasing strain. In education for example, despite targeted support by international and national stakeholders through the No Lost Generation initiative, there remain gaps in the capacity of public education systems to absorb high numbers of refugee children or to cater for their diverse needs. Access to higher education for refugees is extremely challenging: most students or those who were about to commence their studies cannot afford higher education institutions in host countries or face language or certification barriers. Health services are well developed throughout the region but delivery systems are struggling to

cope with the vastly increased demand. Many refugees are also suffering the physical and psychosocial impact of conflict and displacement and require high levels of, often specialised, care. The increased demand for water has placed enormous strain on national and local resources in a region with high levels of water scarcity and weak infrastructure. Maintaining service levels for host populations at the same time as meeting the diverse and large-scale needs of refugees is a major challenge for service providers around the sub-region.

International humanitarian and development organisations are engaging in a multi-layered approach, providing specialized services directly to refugees (particularly those in camps) and working with national and local service providers to increase their capacities to deliver services for host communities, and refugees as appropriate, through provision of training, technical assistance, financial support, equipment and supplies.

## Good Practice Principles and Innovative Approaches

***Equitable access:*** Both refugees and host populations are finding it difficult to access quality health, education, water and other basic services and the resulting competition is fuelling local tensions. Notwithstanding the needs and vulnerabilities of refugees, mitigating the impact of the crisis on host communities (including to protect development gains) and ensuring some degree of equity in basic service provision for all affected populations is key to promoting social cohesion. For example, UNHCR's regional Community Support Projects programme targets host communities receiving the highest numbers of refugees and aims to fill critical service gaps, whilst promoting social cohesion. The programme is implemented in five countries and across all sectors, with activities including upgrading of school buildings and health clinics, expanding water networks and pumping stations, providing furniture and other supplies for public institutions, providing waste collection trucks, and livelihood support<sup>39</sup>.

***Ensuring services are available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable:*** Whatever the context, education, health and other basic service interventions should be based on the principles that they are 1). Available – service facilities and institutions are functional and functioning, minimizing burden on refugees; 2). Accessible – service facilities are physically and economically accessible to all those who need them, without discrimination; 3). Acceptable – services are relevant, culturally appropriate and of adequate quality; and 4).

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<sup>39</sup> In 2014, 163 short-term quick impact projects were implemented in five countries.

Adaptable – services are flexible and able to meet the diverse and changing needs of communities and individuals<sup>40</sup>. Integrating these principles in current programmes helps increase access in the short term and may help to address some of the long-standing challenges in the region including the disparity in availability and quality of public services, lack of integration of public and private systems, and limited regulation of service providers.

***Building on existing structures and capacities:*** Ensuring sustainable service provision requires investments (infrastructure, staff and equipment) in existing governmental, private sector and other service delivery systems and, to the extent possible, avoiding establishing parallel services. Building on existing systems can also be a more cost effective approach, as evidenced in UNRWA's provision of services to Palestine Refugees from Syria (and some Syrian refugees) through its existing school and health facilities in Lebanon and Jordan. Ensuring refugees can access established local services, alongside host populations, can also contribute to a sense of inclusion in local communities – providing that additional capacity is provided to maintain pre-existing service levels. Collaboration within and across agencies is another way to increase impact and realize synergies from existing capacities; the Vulnerability Assessment Framework used collaboration effectively to dramatically increase the effectiveness of refugee assessment and prioritization and to broaden cross-sector applicability.

Integrated programming: Addressing the complex needs and vulnerabilities of affected populations requires a comprehensive approach that integrates or combines different activities and objectives. For example, the provision of non-formal or remedial education services for vulnerable children (such as that provided by UNICEF and partners across the sub-region) is complementary to formal public education programmes. Integrating psychosocial support in community and education programmes is key to identifying vulnerable refugee children, youth and their families and providing them with appropriate care and support. UNRWA, for example, has recruited additional school counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists to facilitate more effective referrals and specialist care in its schools. Similarly, integrating water, sanitation and health objectives in community and education programmes can help to improve the health situation of affected populations. In Jordan, for example, Relief International is working with local schools and CBOs to promote parents and caregivers as agents of change in their communities through providing them with training on hygiene promotion and water conservation techniques.

Public-private partnerships: Private sector schools, hospitals and clinics and other infrastructure were already an important complement to public service systems in several countries in the sub-region before this crisis. Exploiting and expanding these private sector capacities is crucial to ensuring adequate national capacity to address the vast increases in demand for services. For example, the International Medical Corps (IMC), in partnership with UNHCR, is working with a network of private sector hospitals in Lebanon to facilitate provision of secondary healthcare services for refugees, covering up to 75% of the costs of treatment, and providing them with training and supplies as necessary. In Jordan, WASH sector partners are working closely with parastatal water and sanitation companies to expand or improve their network infrastructure in more remote areas to service refugee and host communities.

The following projects reflect several of the principles mentioned above.



# 6.1

## World Vision International's Remedial Education Project in Jordan: *Providing accountable remedial education support to vulnerable host and refugee children*



### Objectives



Provide remedial education for Syrian and Jordanian boys and girls to enable them to better follow the curriculum in public schools.

### Project Description



World Vision International (WVI) sponsored a remedial education project implemented by the Women's Program Centre in its facility in Irbid City. The project was organized around three phases during which refugee and Jordanian children received remedial education in a range of subjects, including maths, science and English. The implementation modality was designed specifically to enable continuous feedback from the children, caregivers and project staff that could inform on-going adaptation and modification of the approach and activities. The classes included both Syrian refugee children from nearby neighbourhoods and Jordanian children from lower-income families. In total, 300 children (70% refugees and 30% Jordanian children) graduated from the classes during the period July 2013 to May 2014. The classes enabled Jordanian children to get much-needed additional tuition in important school subjects and enabled Syrian children to catch up on the many months of schooling they had missed during the conflict and displacement. The programme also integrated child protection support - training sessions were conducted by WVI for staff covering topics such as child rights, child protection, parenting skills, and case management. Monthly meetings held by WPC between project staff and parents and caregivers focused on raising awareness of child protection and good parenting skills. In addition to continuous consultation with all stakeholders, a mid-programme evaluation was conducted using focus group discussions and key informant interviews with the children, parents, caregivers and staff. The feedback

provided was used by WVI and WPC to make changes to the programme including adding hygiene promotion, increasing the quality and quantity of food for the children and increasing decision-making authority of the children in some class activities.

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### Good Practice

The programme was heavily focused on ensuring a consultative approach to design and implementation, with a continuous process of evaluation and adaptation based on feedback from beneficiaries and implementing staff. The flexibility of the programme facilitated a high level of accountability to beneficiaries and maximized outcomes. This integrated approach, combining education and child protection objectives, also drew upon and strengthened local capacities: it was implemented largely by a local NGO which was best able to assess needs and communicate effectively with the children and their families; WVI staff built the capacity of the project staff through specialized training; and the project enhanced the skills of families and caregivers. In bringing refugee and host community children together, the programme also contributed to enhanced social cohesion between the children and their respective communities.



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### Innovation

The programme presents a process innovation in relation to ensuring accountability to beneficiaries through integrating their feedback in design and implementation.



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### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The way that accountability and responsiveness has been built into this programme is highly replicable across different sectors and in varying contexts. Partnerships with local or national NGOs are essential to ensure effective implementation of specialised education support programmes like this - local civil society actors are better able to understand the specific needs of vulnerable individuals and families in a local area, and how they can be supported most effectively, including through community and family support networks. With regards remedial education in particular, engagement with local and central authorities in this kind of programme is important to ensure that the education provided is recognised as complementary to the formal education system.





### Resources required

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The level of flexibility needed in this approach may necessitate increased financial resources to absorb extra costs incurred through changes in project activities. Facilitating consultations and engagement with all stakeholders also requires project staff fully dedicated to community engagement who have a detailed understanding of local social and cultural dynamics, as well as staff with technical educational skills.



### Expected challenges and risks

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High levels of consultation with beneficiaries may increase their expectations that the agency can deliver whatever they require. Donor reporting frameworks may limit the degree of flexibility that is possible in programme implementation.



### Risk mitigation measures

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Clear communication with all stakeholders at the outset of the programme as to the planned outputs and limitations is important to manage expectations. Discussions with donors on the value-added of this approach may be required to secure greater flexibility in funding agreements.

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# 6.2

## UNHCR and UEFA's Zaatari Camp Football League, Jordan: *Using sport to enhance psychosocial well-being and health*



- NRC
- IRD
- IRC
- JEN
- AFDP
- Save the Children
- ACTED
- IMC Worldwide
- Finn Church Aid
- Oxfam



### Objectives



Establish a self-sustaining sports league in the camp, run by refugee communities, to provide psychosocial support to children, youth and their families and support empowerment of girls and young women to engage in sporting activities.

### Project Description



UNHCR and UEFA have established a football league in Zaatari Camp comprising 12 boys' and 12 girls' teams. Professional coaches provided by UEFA are training a network of Syrian refugee football coaches from the different areas of the camp to run the league themselves. All teams have been partnered with an INGO, which provides on-going support including equipment and sports kit. The INGOs are also involved in a project to establish football pitches and other sports facilities in the camp. European football teams, including Olympic de Marseille, and Borussia Dortmund, have also provided football equipment. The programme encourages engagement of girls in sport: the trainee coaches from the communities are used to reach out to parents and caregivers to encourage them to allow girls to participate in this and other sporting activities; and special arrangements are made for the girls to train and play on indoor pitches. Over 1,500 refugee children and youth now play football each day in the camp.

## Good Practice

The programme uses sport as a psychosocial support activity (through physical exercise and routine), promotes the importance of regular exercise for health, and builds self-confidence and life skills of the children (e.g. communication and teamwork). It is intended to be self-sustaining – establishing a league and associated facilities that can be maintained and run by the communities in the camp. It is also a community-based project that builds a sense of ownership over local systems and structures in the camp.



## Innovation

The project represents a paradigm innovation in that it uses sport to achieve multiple aid objectives. The partnership with UEFA, as well as European football teams, is also highly innovative – bringing the highest level of professional sporting expertise to a humanitarian setting. The particular focus on engaging girls in sport is also a process innovation in this region.



## Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

There is potential to scale-up the project across the country, including to establish other mini-leagues that include local refugee and host communities teams, or mixed teams. Sponsors of the programme within Jordan would be needed to achieve this. The project is also replicable across the sub-region and across different sports: it could be focussed in densely populated refugee locations and help to foster positive interaction between vulnerable refugee and host populations.



## Resources required

Partnerships with professional football organisations or institutions are critical to providing the same level of professional training that characterises the Zaatari project. The 'buddy' system whereby INGOs partner with teams in areas they are working in is also an important source of small-scale funding and equipment necessary to set up and maintain the project.





### Expected challenges and risks

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It may be challenging in some locations to get host community engagement in the project. Securing either an extension to the UEFA partnership or support from other professional footballing institution may be difficult.



### Risk mitigation measures

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Risk assessments and a high level of community engagement would be required to foster positive engagement of host and refugee communities in this kind of project.

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## UNHCR Refugee Helpline in Jordan: *Responding quickly and accurately to emergency, protection and information calls*

6.3



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- Zain
- WhatsApp
- Cisco Systems

### Objectives

Provide information to refugees and asylum-seekers in Jordan about services available and processing of their case; receive complaints and inquiries about urgent protection problems; provide basic counselling and public awareness; and monitor trends in refugee protection.



### Project Description

In refugee emergencies, humanitarian organisations usually experience a sharp increase in the number of telephone calls and office visits. This can overwhelm staff and frustrate callers. UNCHR took a few simple and inexpensive measures to update its helpline by creating a call centre, which more effectively handles a higher call volume and has reduced the number of people coming to UNHCR premises unnecessarily. This has saved refugees and UNHCR time and money.



The UNHCR Helpline, operating in Jordan since 2008, was upgraded in March 2014 to use Cisco Call Centre Express, using an automated call distributor that allows calls to be dispersed to agents, provides recorded information to minimize queuing. This expanded the capacity of the helpline and the number of agents increased to 15 agents responding to refugees' queries daily. The Helpline handles 256,155 calls per year with an average of 711 calls per day and approximately 45 calls per hour with an average call duration of 2.46 minutes.



### Good Practice

The main focus of the Helpline - and the difference to the UNHCR outreach teams who physically visit refugee communities - is its ability to streamline refugees' inquiries on spot and to forward minimum referrals to respective units and focal points. This ensures information is available and accessible to all refugees. The helpline has reduced the burden on refugees by minimizing costs and hardship on refugees to commute to the office and partners among other benefits. It has also improved the quality of services onsite by successfully reducing untenable volume of unnecessary office visits. Standard cases can now be addressed on the phone, given humanitarian workers more capacity to deal with more complex cases. The helpline effectively engages in public-private partnerships to ensure the quality, effectiveness and innovative nature of the helpline. In summary, the update of the Helpline has built on UNCHR's existing strengths and increased quality of services to refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan.



### Innovation

The helpline is a process innovation that improves the quality, accessibility and speed of service delivery. Innovative elements of the Helpline that have led to its success include: an enhanced call manager system (currently Cisco) which allows for heavy call routing, advanced interactive voice response (IVR) with callers, voicemail after working hours and during holidays, a real-time dashboard for the benefit of the agents monitoring of daily calls and outbound calls; a toll free call to the Helpline if the Syria Zain SIM card used (these SIM cards are being distributed through an agreement with Zain to registered refugees); usage of WhatsApp free text messaging which has been helpful in the identification of trends and rumours within the refugee community.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

Call centres should not only register the number and duration of calls. They should also record and analyse the content of enquiries, obtaining data on the main problems refugees are faced with and on information gaps. A well-organised call centre should be able to bring the majority of cases to a conclusion in one conversation to keep the number of referrals to a minimum. The call centre has been able to adapt staffing based on the types of queries. For example, a simple analysis showed that a large number of calls were about WFP benefits and reductions. To resolve this UNCHR is collaborating with the World Food Programme (WFP) and two WFP staff are working at the UNHCR Helpline on a full-time basis.

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## Resources required

Agents must remain calm and friendly at all times, even when dealing with distressed or aggressive callers. Training agents on call etiquette, handling frustrated callers can help in this regard. The helpline needs to be staffed to meet call volumes, which can fluctuate based on developments in the refugee crisis. Monitoring call volume and average time to abandon call before answered allows the centre to ensure service levels are met. Telephone agents need to be kept abreast of changes and developments and have all the necessary information in order to quickly and accurately respond to callers queries. All agents must have the same level of information, so there is no contradiction in what they are telling the refugees. Frequent questions and standardized answers should be prepared in advance to ensure a consistent response.



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## Expected challenges and risks

There is the risk for fraud when humanitarian cases are addressed over the phone and not in person and there is potential for more complaints because there is less human interaction when providing information over the telephone or texts.



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## Risk mitigation measures

The Helpline is in ongoing discussion on obtaining a call recording system for quality control, monitoring of complaints and as part of an anti-fraud package.



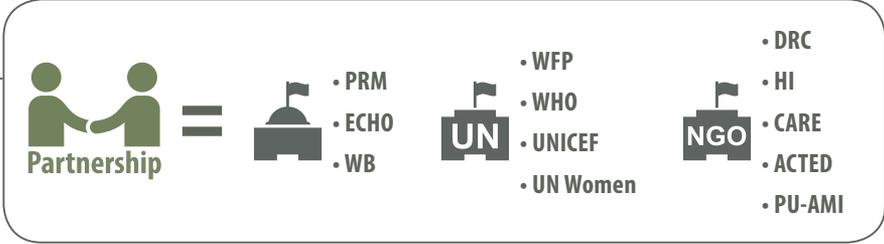
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Reference added to list in back: *How to Manage Refugee Helplines: A few tips to help organisations cope with emergency calls*, UNCHR; accessed May 2015 from <https://data.unhcr.org>

# 6.4

## UNHCR's Refugee Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF): *an inter-agency approach to the analysis and targeting of assistance on the basis of refugee household vulnerability*



### Objectives

Put in place a system that supports the humanitarian community in Jordan to establish a profile of vulnerability among Syrian refugee cases and enables the monitoring of changes in vulnerability over time in a more efficient and equitable manner while strengthening the coordination and decision-making of the delivery of humanitarian assistance among key agencies in Jordan.



### Project Description

The Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) is an inter-agency approach to the analysis and targeting of assistance on the basis of refugee case vulnerability, focusing on non-camp refugees in Jordan. While most humanitarian groups already provide direct assistance to the most vulnerable beneficiaries, what had been lacking is a comprehensive system that includes gathering more and deeper household information, organizations collaborating to create a common set of vulnerability criteria within each sector, and a data analysis tool to identify the most vulnerable people in a crisis. The VAF attempts to fill this gap, providing an in depth service to support analysis and targeting of humanitarian assistance. For targeting, the VAF model is now informing WFP Food Voucher targeting in Jordan and UNICEF's education cash support to educationally vulnerable families. It will also be expanded to cover UNHCR's cash assistance programmes. The VAF is now being rolled out to other partners both as data collection agencies and those requiring information on refugee cases to inform assistance eligibility decisions.

In terms of analysis, vulnerability data is being collected, based on agreed criteria, through a brief, rolling multi-sector assessment of all Syrian refugee cases living outside of camps; the assessments are recorded and coded into a central database. Over 40,000 family visits have been conducted using the VAF questionnaire between July 2014 and May 2015, through the UNHCR and IRD Home Visit system. A series of algorithms have been developed through which this data is analysed in a two-part process. Firstly, using an econometric welfare model, refugee cases are assigned a 'welfare score', using case-level expenditure as the gold standard. Secondly, sector specific models have been developed, with the sectors that provide a vulnerability score by case for WASH, education, basic needs and food security, shelter, health. Additionally, models have been developed to assess indicators of vulnerability that are found to be universal across all sectors (e.g. documentation, dependency ratios and the use of coping strategies).

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### Good Practice

The Vulnerability Assessment Framework supports the targeting of assistance in a more efficient and fair manner, based on the application of common vulnerability criteria. This helps ensure that refugees have equitable access to services based on their needs and that services can be adapted based on changes in vulnerability over time and that the most vulnerable among the refugee population can be identified and prioritized for available assistance.



The VAF also helps strengthen the coordination and decision-making of the delivery of humanitarian assistance by providing dynamic monitoring and evaluation data and by working with sectoral, inter-agency working groups in key areas (e.g. health, food security, protection etc.) to coordinate efforts. The development of standardised criteria for vulnerability and the different thresholds also allows for humanitarian actors to talk about relative vulnerabilities in equivalent terms and to track those vulnerabilities across the refugee population and both map and respond to the vulnerabilities identified. The high level of collaboration, coordination and dedication among the large variety of partners is a key factor that sparked innovation, cross-sector applicability, and excellent decision-making in a complex environment.

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### Innovation

The framework represents a paradigm innovation because it creates a new system of vulnerability measurement that can be used by various agencies across sectors and geographical areas, simplifying a complex problem and leading to increased accuracy of assessments. It provides a more nuanced definition of vulnerability that includes both hazards and risks as well as



families' capacities for addressing the vulnerabilities, thus facilitating resilience-building and creating a more comprehensive picture of needs. The way the VAF was governed by a steering committee and adapted by hundreds of agency representatives in sectoral working groups is also a paradigm innovation because the group, as a disparate network of agencies, created a networked system that collaborated to generate a solution that redefined vulnerability assessment. This new network has greater power and influence than any one player and future changes can be made more easily because of the level of shared ownership and collaboration.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

Although there are significant differences between the sectors' definitions of vulnerability there are common themes: in particular the ten universal indicators that contribute to the different vulnerabilities of Syrian refugee cases. For example a case with severe documentation, dependency ratio and welfare vulnerabilities are extremely likely to be also experiencing risks associated with shelter, WASH, education etc. If this cross-sectoral analysis is applied, it will facilitate a holistic analysis of vulnerability by agencies and sectors and then allow for more comprehensive identification of needs, design of programs, and ultimately the coordination of assistance. It could also provide insights into how reductions in assistance or access to services in one sector would have operation-wide ramifications and affect Syrian refugees' ability to maintain family welfare. Now that the VAF modeling and thresholds are in place and a baseline survey has been conducted, scaling up is a relatively straight-forward process; in the next few months multiple partners will be able to both collect and benefit from case level VAF assessments.



### Resources required

The development process of the VAF required considerable resource commitment. There was a dedicated team of three working full time supported by various in house experts: in particular colleagues from coordination, Information Management, Data Analysis Group and Protection. Continued collaboration among the twelve agencies on the VAF Steering Committee and the hundreds of agency representatives in the Sectoral Working Groups, who have contributed their expertise and deep knowledge of refugees' needs, will help ensure continued progress of the VAF. Additional research and coordination will also be required to take the VAF to the next level within Jordan and to share the model with others in the region, and this will require designated staff.

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## Expected challenges and risks

Working closely with the sectors, the VAF team can customise both sector and geographical analysis in line with specific priorities. The key application, however, will be in the targeting of assistance at the case level – a process already being applied by WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR – to ensure assistance is efficiently allocated to the most vulnerable. This effort will require additional coordination, analysis and resources. To fully use the VAF for targeting at a case level partners will require a firm understanding of the potential inclusion and exclusion errors inherent in modeling. The VAF team has developed guidance notes for agencies use and will continue to work with partners to customize VAF analysis for specific purposes.



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## Risk mitigation measures

The high-level of collaboration among partner agencies has led to excellent communication and problem-solving capacity at the sectoral and cross-agency levels. Building on these good working relationships and in continued partnership with the Jordanian Government and other stakeholders, the risks will be minimized. The VAF development has also included the development and piloting of a VAF appeals process which ensures that refugees that have had a change in the status of the assistance they are receiving have the opportunity to request a case review. The appeals process represents a best practise and is in line with the VAF process and partners commitment to accountability to the refugee community.



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# Supporting Local Government

## Principles

- Support, not substitute; assessing capacity and resource gaps; financial sustainability; encouraging good governance; linking local and central government

## Projects

- 7.1 UNDP's Mapping of Risks and Resources Methodology in Lebanon: Supporting government self-assessments and local planning processes
- 7.2 UN-Habitat's establishment of Regional Technical Offices in Unions of Municipalities in Lebanon: Building sustainable technical capacities in local government

## Background

The Syria crisis has impacted governments in the region at all levels – straining their resources, services and infrastructure to the limit. Sub-national and local governments in particular have been on the front line of the response – providing much needed shelter, water, food and other assistance to huge numbers of arriving refugees. These local authorities have already shown leadership in addressing the impact of the crisis in their areas. However, most require increased capacity and resources (financial, human resources, equipment and infrastructure) to sustain local service levels to host populations, address the impact of refugee inflows and mitigate rising social tensions<sup>41</sup>.

International organizations are paying greater attention to working with local authorities across a range of sectors to enhance their capacities to respond now and in the longer-term, helping ensure they are stable and adaptable to this dynamic crisis.

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41 Inter-Agency (2014a), "Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework".

## Good Practice Principles and Innovative Approaches

**Support, not substitute:** Promoting accountable financial management and administration, providing technical and financial support and facilitating participatory policy and planning processes are key to helping local authorities cope, recover and transform themselves and their communities in response to this crisis<sup>42</sup>. Across the region, local governments are struggling to respond to the overwhelming demand on services, often lacking the necessary resources and skills to institute comprehensive solutions. Many host communities already had low confidence in local government due to historical under-performance or political dynamics. Focussing on augmenting local government capacities, rather than providing parallel services, reinforces good governance and increases the legitimacy of local governments vis-à-vis local populations. As a minimum, ensuring that local authorities are fully informed of and consulted on the activities of international organisations and other actors in their administrative area supports their efforts to lead coherent, coordinated responses that address identified needs and minimize duplication.

**Assessing capacity and resource gaps:** Providing support to local authorities first requires an assessment of their capacities and resources – ensuring that external support offered is targeting *identified* gaps. Given the high levels of technical and other capacities that sub-national and local authorities in the sub-region have, supporting them in self-assessment methodologies can build confidence and trust in international partners, as well as offering accurate data on what type of support is needed. Assessments should cover all aspects of government functions including managerial, technical, budgeting, planning and implementation capacities (including re-prioritization or maximization of existing resources) and should form the basis of capacity-support programmes.

**Financial sustainability:** Sustainable aid interventions must also be *financially* sustainable, i.e. the costs of sustaining a programme beyond the life of external financing can be absorbed into local (or central) government budgets. This requires multi-year planning and budgetary processes for governments and donors alike. It may also require efforts to enhance the financial management capacity of local government (including their capacity to mobilize resources directly) and some degree of external funding to bridge gaps in resources that local government may have in the short term. Capitalising on the robust private sector in the region, expanding public private partnerships for the

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42 For more on effective capacity building approaches see UNDP (2008), “Supporting Capacity Development: The UNDP Approach”.

local, as well as national, response could also improve financial sustainability - international actors could provide technical assistance to support outreach of local government to potential private sector partners.

***Encouraging good governance***<sup>43</sup>: Supporting inclusive and meaningful participation in local government processes is crucial to enhancing the performance and the perceptions of local authorities. Inclusive participation in this context means facilitating or encouraging public consultations, clearly led by local governments, with communities and other non-governmental actors as part of local policy and planning processes. Encouraging local governments to ensure appropriate representation of different political, ethnic, religious, as well as age and gender groups in such consultations is particularly important given the diverse interests and agendas at play in affected locales. The participation of affected communities in local governance processes can also foster their ownership of the outputs and outcomes, enabling crisis responses to capitalise on the collective resources of local stakeholders. It may also foster innovative solutions to local problems.

Linking local and central government: The crisis in the region is, in some cases, exacerbating long-standing challenges in the relationship between local and central government. Efforts to support local government development plans should also be linked to national planning processes and conversely, should encourage more effective provision of resources from central government to support local government plans. Encouraging policy coherence between national, sub-national and local levels, in relation to the impact of the refugee situation, is also necessary to facilitate implementation of assistance programmes at local level and ensure more equitable standards of response across the national context.

The following examples demonstrate a number of these good practice principles and offer innovative ideas for supporting local government.



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<sup>43</sup> See for example, UNDP (2011), "Towards Human Resilience: Sustaining MDG Progress in an Age of Economic Uncertainty".



## UNDP's Mapping of Risks and Resources Methodology in Lebanon: *Supporting government self-assessments and local planning processes*

7.1



### Objectives

Support coordinated interventions at municipal level by identifying problems, related risks and possible responses in a participatory way, and on the basis of this initial assessment, produce multi-sectoral Municipal Action Plans.



### Project Description

The Mapping of Risks and Resources (MRR) is a conflict sensitive self-assessment methodology aimed at facilitating dialogue and collaboration between a wide range of local stakeholders in order to identify and prioritize risks, needs and resources, and possible responses. In its pilot phase, UNDP targeted 48 municipalities with whom the agency already had an established working relationship. Municipal Working Groups were formed in each municipality with broad representation from the area including communities, local authorities, civil society and the private sector. The MRR methodology focuses on a 2-3 day workshop held by the Municipal Working Groups to develop a map of local risks and resources and a related Municipal Action Plan that offers a prioritized list of short, medium and long-term projects, with related costs, resources available and resources to be mobilized, clearly outlined. Each Municipal Action Plan is geo-referenced, providing a visual map of needs and agreed solutions. The Maps of Risks and Resources and the related Action Plans are being used by municipalities to establish local planning and coordination platforms.





### Good Practice

The MRR methodology offers a quick, effective and cost-efficient process by which to develop coherent, participatory, evidence-based action plans in a crisis context. It is complementary to longer-term local development planning processes. The action plans developed offer prioritized, cost-effective solutions (often using existing capacities or resources) and can be used as a platform for coordinating investments from national and international stakeholders. The broad representation of local actors in the process ensures that the prioritisation of problems and solutions is based on common interests. Ensuring that local government lead, and are seen to lead, this process also reinforces the legitimacy of local government vis-à-vis their constituents. Involving the central government in this local-level process has helped foster effective dialogue and collaboration between the different levels of government, including in relation to allocation of national resources. The MoSA has taken leadership of this process and, with continuing technical and financial support from UNDP, is building a sustainable model for local development planning processes across the country. The municipalities involved also benefit from increased capacity and skills to lead local level planning processes now and for the future.



### Innovation

Whilst the idea of working with local authorities to build their capacity for local development planning is not new, the approach adopted in the MRR is a process innovation: it focuses on risks that are emanating from the current situation that may affect a wide range of stakeholders, rather than needs, thereby enabling stakeholders involved to agree on a negotiated set of priorities. The methodology also focuses on ensuring a broad representation of different interests, not just different actors.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The MRR is already being scaled up: the Ministry of Social Affairs is rolling it out in 107 additional municipalities - with a target of reaching all 242 municipalities that have been identified as particularly impacted/vulnerable due to the refugee situation. The MRR is highly replicable across the sub-region: it enhances government leadership of crisis response planning by empowering local authorities to develop credible, evidence-based, local action plans that prioritise projects or activities based on common interests of all local stakeholders, including affected communities. Engaging central authorities (e.g. line ministries) in the process also reinforces central-local government dialogue and support – essential to enhance the delivery capacity of local authorities and the alignment of local strategies and international partners' interventions with national policies.

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### Resources required

Technical staff from relevant UN or other international agency are required to support local government in the implementation of the methodology (e.g. one senior staff member to support the methodology at a policy level and one junior officer to support data entry); and holding workshops incurs small-scale costs. The projects or solutions identified through the workshop process could be resourced through local or central government budgets, private sector partnerships or from international aid contributions and can vary depending on the needs and circumstances in each local area.



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### Expected challenges and risks

Guaranteeing a balanced participation of local stakeholders is difficult and failure to do so increases the risk that problems and solutions favour the interests of one group. Local government may also fail to deliver the solutions that are agreed upon (due to lack of funding or other factors) which may undermine its credibility.



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### Risk mitigation measures

In-depth analysis or knowledge of the local context and power dynamics, developing the selection process and criteria in collaboration with civil-society actors, and utilising existing community or social structures may mitigate the risks of elite capture. Managing expectations may be achieved through clear articulation of roles and responsibilities and expected outcomes. Accompanying the MRR process with a minimum level of central government, donor or agency funding commitments may also ensure delivery of some, if not all, solutions and projects agreed.



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# 7.2

## UN-Habitat’s establishment of Regional Technical Offices (RTO) in Unions of Municipalities in Lebanon: *Building sustainable technical capacities in local government*



- UNHCR
- UNICEF



- Unions of Municipalities
- Ministry of Interior
- Municipalities
- Water Establishment
- Ministry of Social Affairs

### Objectives



Strengthen local government capacity to cope with the increasing demands on services, through establishing sustainable technical capacity.

### Project Description



This project builds on a previous UN-Habitat programme set up in the post-2006 conflict period. The programme established technical teams in Unions of Municipalities to provide the unions and local mayors with advice and support on a range of issues including shelter, water and sanitation and other infrastructure. Three Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) that are still functioning from the original project have been complemented with five new RTOs set up during the current crisis. The RTOs comprise technical teams staffed by local, qualified engineers and technicians and, more recently legal advisors and social protection officers. The units are embedded in Unions of Municipalities, located in their offices in most cases, and administered as if they are union staff (funds are channelled for their salaries from UN-Habitat to the unions). UN-Habitat field engineers and coordinators work closely with RTO staff and provide technical back-up and training.

The RTOs currently perform two support functions for municipalities: 1) helping them identify, assess and facilitate shelter solutions for Syrian refugees (in line with UNHCR standards) through providing rapid technical assessments of

housing units identified as needing rehabilitation, and providing information and guidelines for landlords on upgrading their units for renting to refugees; and 2) helping them respond to the needs of host communities affected by the influx of refugees by guiding basic urban service projects, including identifying necessary infrastructure work, undertaking feasibility and technical studies, advising on prioritization and providing technical support to implementation. RTOs also assist unions in coordinating international aid actors operating in their area and are introducing GIS mapping systems to facilitate regional level data-gathering to guide municipal projects and planning. The recent addition of legal advisors and social protection officers, supported by UNHCR and UNICEF, means RTOs can more systematically assess local conflict and social dynamics and how these will impact design and prioritization of technical service projects.

### Good Practice

The RTO model institutionalizes local government technical planning capacities and promotes a community-driven approach to identifying and prioritizing basic urban service projects. This has proven effective both in emergency phases and in longer-term recovery and development (as per the post-2006 recovery response). As the staff in the RTOs are locally engaged and often residents of the area, they are able, in a short period of time, to navigate local political and social dynamics and connect communities with local authorities to find appropriate technical solutions to service problems. The RTO model has proved to be cost efficient and sustainable: mayors noted in a recent evaluation that this model is more cost efficient than commissioning private engineers separately for each project and four out of the five unions have maintained, or have plans to maintain, the RTO as an active unit to be funded from their own budget. Although not an intended outcome, the RTOs have encouraged donors to work with and invest in the unions.



### Innovation

The project is a *paradigm* innovation in that it has successfully established long-term, sustainable technical capacity within local government units to respond to humanitarian and development needs (shelter, infrastructure, municipal services). It has capitalized on local knowledge, capacities and structures already in place to strengthen the resilience of local government institutions during a crisis phase and enabling them to deliver results in real-time and over the longer-term.





### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

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Whilst the RTOs were designed for the specific local governance systems in Lebanon, the model is highly replicable for other countries in the sub-region. Detailed assessments of local governance systems and capacities in each context would be needed to identify the gaps in local government capacities and related adjustments to the make-up of RTO teams, reporting lines, geographic coverage and focus areas. Transparency in the selection and recruitment of RTO staff is key to building confidence in the teams among communities and other local actors. Engaging central authorities is key to ensuring local government can retain the expertise that RTOs provide into the longer-term.



### Resources required

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RTO staff are locally engaged and paid local salaries consistent with government pay scales, so the costs are comparatively low. It may be necessary to plan for a financial commitment to these salaries for a period of up to two years in order to give the local government sufficient time to absorb costs into their own budgets. Provision of computers and other technical equipment to the RTOs may also be required, depending on available financial and other resources in the local government.



### Expected challenges and risks

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Securing funds to sustain RTO staff in the long term will always be a challenge unless the union incorporates the team in its own budgetary and administrative planning. A recent evaluation of the programme also highlighted the risks that local authorities focus the RTOs on small, technical projects rather than allowing them to advise and guide macro-level infrastructure planning.



### Risk mitigation measures

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Close engagement and follow-up with local authorities would minimize potential risks and challenges in the day-to-day work of RTOs. The sustained impact of the original RTOs may be useful in demonstrating the added value of this mechanism to new local authorities across the sub-region.

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# Implementing Cash-based Programmes

## Principles

- Support, not substitute; assessing capacity and resource gaps; financial sustainability; encouraging good governance; linking local and central government

## Projects

- **8.1** WFP and partners' regional e-voucher programme: Addressing food insecurity at scale and in a way that maintains dignity of beneficiaries and supports local economies
- **8.2** UNHCR's Refugee Cash Programming with Biometrics: Targeted, cost-effective cash assistance for basic needs, food and health

## Background

Cash<sup>44</sup> and vouchers have been used as a programming modality in the sub-region previously by a number of UN agencies, including UNRWA<sup>45</sup> and UNHCR<sup>46</sup>, but in the current crisis they are being used on an unprecedented scale, across most sectors and in all crisis-affected countries. Providing a greater degree of dignity and choice for beneficiaries than in-kind assistance, the use of unconditional and conditional cash and vouchers is proving a highly effective and efficient tool in this largely middle-income region with generally high literacy rates, functioning banking systems, and relatively stable markets. Providing assistance in the form of cash or vouchers enables beneficiaries to make choices as to what assistance they need and when. It can offer a

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<sup>44</sup> See, for example, the Cash Learning Partnership – [www.cashlearning.org](http://www.cashlearning.org).

<sup>45</sup> UNRWA has been using cash-based assistance in varying formats for Palestine refugees for many years and it now constitutes a greater proportion of UNRWA's emergency work than in-kind aid, allowing refugees the freedom to prioritize their own needs across several sectors.

<sup>46</sup> Cash, through an ATM card system, was used as an effective programming tool in UNHCR's response to the Iraqi refugee crisis in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan – see, UNHCR (2009), "Surviving in the City: A Review of UNHCR's Operation for Iraqi Refugees in Urban Areas of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria".

sense of normalcy and inclusiveness, enabling families to interact with local shops and service providers, rather than queuing for in-kind assistance from international organisations. Cash programmes can be a quicker distribution method and offer some cost efficiencies since they eliminate the need for large-scale in-kind distributions and necessary procurement and logistics. The direct and indirect benefit of cash-based programmes to national and local economies is also evident: recent assessments in Lebanon and Jordan indicate that cash-based programmes can increase the revenues of local and national retailers, create new jobs in local communities and that cash provided can have a significant multiplier effect<sup>47</sup>.

Across the region, international organisations are using cash-based programming within and across sectors to address basic needs for food, shelter, education and health. There are a range of risks and challenges inherent in using cash-based programming on such a large-scale but the following principles and approaches may help to mitigate them.

## Good Practice Principles and Innovative Approaches

***Determining whether cash is appropriate:*** Cash is not a panacea and it is first necessary to determine whether this is the most appropriate programming tool to provide assistance. Undertaking a response analysis, as part of or immediately after a needs assessment, will help to understand the likely efficacy and appropriateness of cash versus other modalities, as well as the most appropriate form of cash programme (conditional or unconditional cash transfers, vouchers or cash for work). Taking into account the preferences of beneficiaries is key at this stage although their preferences may not always be catered for. For example, international organisations in the sub-region report the main preference of beneficiaries is for unconditional cash. However, political and security concerns in some host countries have meant that vouchers are more appropriate since they may be less controversial vis-à-vis host communities and governments. They also enable international organisations to direct beneficiaries' spending towards goods and services linked to their intervention objectives, although compared to cash, this does limit the choice households have.

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47 See WFP (2014b), "Economic Impact Study: Direct and Indirect Effects of the WFP Value-based Food Voucher Programme in Lebanon"; WFP (2014a), "Economic Impact Study: Direct and Indirect Impact of the WFP Food Voucher Programme in Jordan"; and IRC (2014), "Emergency Economies: The Impact of Cash Assistance in Lebanon: An impact evaluation of the 2013-14 winter cash assistance program for Syrian refugees in Lebanon".

**Understanding likely market impact:** Understanding local markets and how they may be impacted by large-scale use of cash-based assistance is essential to inform the design of programmes<sup>48</sup>. For example, between April and May 2013, IRC led an interagency Emergency Market Mapping and Assessment (EMMA)<sup>49</sup>, which evidenced the increasing competition in key labour markets resulting from the refugee influx<sup>50</sup>. Large injections of cash (through various modalities) into local economies can have both positive and negative impacts. Key questions to consider include: whether local markets are competitive; whether there are any restrictions on movement of goods, particularly to remote areas; whether existing traders or retailers can respond to quick increases in demand; whether there is a risk that increased demand may result in rising prices; and whether local markets are sufficiently integrated to be able to mitigate the risk of inflation<sup>51</sup>.

**Effectively communicating with beneficiaries:** Noting the multiple cash-based programmes being implemented across the region, communicating effectively with beneficiaries is essential to avoid confusion, identify any problems and quickly put mitigating measures in place, ensuring that people are able to access their assistance quickly and efficiently. Combining different modes of communication may support more effective outreach: for example, Support to Life (a Turkish NGO) utilised mobile technology, a network of Syrian volunteers and traditional leaders (mukhtars) to communicate with the beneficiaries of their food e-voucher programme in Turkey<sup>52</sup>. Articulating a clear mechanism through which beneficiaries can report problems and receive help is also necessary to ensure the efficient functioning of a cash-based programme and to build confidence among beneficiaries in the implementing agency.

**Rigorous monitoring and evaluation:** Whilst the methodology for monitoring implementation of cash-based programmes may not be substantially different to in-kind assistance, lessons learnt indicate the need for rigorous monitoring at multiple levels. Vouchers in particular pose unique risks because they can create a market dominated by a small number of players. This requires monitoring of shops to ensure services are appropriate and to

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48 For a checklist of questions that could be included in response analysis and market assessments, please see Harvey, P. and Bailey, S., (2011), "HPN Good Practice Review: Cash Transfer Programming in Emergencies".

49 See <http://emma-toolkit.org>

50 Battistin, F. (2014), "IRC Cash and Livelihoods Support Programme in Lebanon".

51 More information and guidance on market assessments is available at [www.cashlearning.org](http://www.cashlearning.org); the Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis toolkit (<http://emma-toolkit.org>); and Harvey, P. and Bailey, S., (2011), "HPN Good Practice Review: Cash Transfer Programming in Emergencies".

52 Kuğu, B. and Okşak, E. (2013). "Evaluation Study of Support to Life's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis 2012 and 2013".

prevent abuse, such as artificially raising prices. For both cash and vouchers, monitoring of prices and supplies is necessary in order to respond to inflation if it occurs (thereby ensuring consistent purchasing power for refugees and host populations). Household-level monitoring is important to understand the probable impact and inform necessary adaptations in programme design and implementation. For example, as part of its 2012 cash assistance programme, UNHCR Jordan and IRD launched a Home Visit project to assess the impact of cash and other assistance on households. Between October 2012 and March 2013, 61,823 refugee home visits in rural and urban areas were conducted and the results have provided a detailed analysis relevant for cash and other programming<sup>53</sup>. In Lebanon, the UNHCR and partners' winterisation unconditional cash assistance programme in 2013/14 was subject to a detailed comparative assessment, conducted by IRC, that is now being used to inform the design of this years programme<sup>54</sup>.

***Ensuring common standards:*** Ensuring that the diversity of cash-based programmes implemented in the region is based on common standards is essential to ensure some degree of coherence and equity of assistance to populations in need, which may help mitigate tensions between different groups. The Cash Working Groups in Jordan and Lebanon are developing common standards for use of cash assistance across multiple sectors, including in relation to needs assessments, vulnerability analysis, distribution methods, post distribution and evaluation measures, as well as sharing of lessons learnt from different sectors.

***Cash as livelihood support:*** Noting the varying policy, legal and practical restrictions in accessing sustainable livelihoods in host countries, cash-based livelihood support is increasingly important for refugees. Cash for work programmes can, for example, offer positive, though short-term, socio-economic benefits. Cash can also be used to pay off debts - an increasing problem for many refugees in this region, in large part due to their lack of access to employment or other income-generating activities. IRC for example has provided unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance to a small number of vulnerable refugees and host communities in northern Lebanon as part of its cash and livelihood support programme<sup>55</sup>.

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53 UNHCR/IRD (2013), "Syrian Refugees Living Outside Camps in Jordan: Home Visit Data Findings, 2013".

54 IRC (2014), "Emergency Economies: The Impact of Cash Assistance in Lebanon: An impact evaluation of the 2013-14 winter cash assistance program for Syrian refugees in Lebanon".

55 Battistin, F. (2014), "IRC Cash and Livelihoods Support Programme in Lebanon".

Enhancing national social protection programmes: The experience of implementing large-scale cash-based programmes for refugees presents opportunities for enhancing national social protection or poverty alleviation programmes. In Lebanon for example, UNHCR, the World Bank and WFP are assisting the Ministry of Social Affairs to implement a food e-voucher system as part of its National Poverty Targeting programme. The system being adopted is similar to that implemented by WFP and partners for Syrian refugees in Lebanon– it uses the same bank partnerships and ATM system, the voucher has the same value and the programmes uses the same list of contracted retailers. Reaching approximately 27,000 people so far in 2014, the programme is to be scaled up further in 2015 for the most vulnerable Lebanese<sup>56</sup>. Cash, perhaps more than in-kind assistance, may cause jealousy and tension between refugees and host communities. Utilising similar approaches to support local poor populations may therefore help mitigate the risk of tensions over cash-based support.

The following regional programmes reflect an innovative approach in cash-based programming and demonstrates some of the good practice principles discussed above.



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<sup>56</sup> UNHCR and the World Bank are providing the initial funding for this scheme and WFP is providing the technical assistance.

WFP and partners' regional e-voucher programme:  
*Addressing food insecurity at scale and in a way that maintains dignity of beneficiaries and supports local economies*

8.1



Partnership



- Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Save the Children
- ACF

- National Governments



- Local banks
- Mastercard

## Objectives

In line with WFP's Strategic Objectives: ('saving lives and protecting livelihoods in emergencies'), 1) Save lives and maintain food security of targeted refugees; and 2) Protect livelihoods and help prevent the depletion of refugees' assets, the overall programme objective is to ensure improved food consumption over the assistance period for targeted Syrian refugee households.



## Project Description

This regional conditional cash voucher programme using an e-card system has been rolled out in four refugee-hosting countries since October 2012, beginning in Turkey. E-cards were adopted as the primary modality of assistance after establishing that local markets were elastic enough to meet increased demand without adversely affecting local supply and prices. The e-cards are part of a global partnership between WFP and MasterCard (except in Egypt). Through this system, families registered with UNHCR receive an e-card that is automatically charged with a fixed amount, per person each month. The e-card is administered by local banks, or as in the case of Egypt, a local retailer. The value of the voucher varies in each country, reflecting the differing market prices of basic commodities that comprise the standard food basket providing 2100kcal for a person, per day. The e-cards can be redeemed at a list of retailers in each country in an open-basket policy that enables a wide choice of food items. Retailers are selected through a competitive process and are provided with training. All retailers must meet certain conditions such



as offering a variety of food items and clearly labelled prices. The number of retailers varies in each context: in Lebanon there are 390+ and in Egypt a single retailer (Carrefour) is used. Monitoring is conducted continuously at household and shop level, as well as of prices and market impact.



### Good Practice

The programme emphasises the importance of maintaining the dignity of beneficiaries; they can choose what they purchase, where and when. This degree of control over their resources reduces exposure to negative coping strategies, such as increased indebtedness, early marriage, survival sex or child labour; and aims to ensure their shopping experience is as normal as possible (the e-card looks like a regular credit or ATM card and the system draws on the prevalence of, and familiarity of refugees with, digital banking systems). It has been flexibly adapted to meet differing needs and circumstances: in Lebanon the high number of retailers reflects the dispersal of refugees across the country; in Egypt, the use of one retailer (Carrefour) reflects the concentration of refugees in a few densely populated urban areas and offered a quicker, more simplified system. The e-card system has proven highly reliable: there have been few implementation problems and beneficiaries have still been able to purchase food during periods of localised insecurity when in-kind distributions by international organisations would likely have been disrupted.

Participating retailers have reported significant increases in revenue (in Lebanon this has doubled on average) and new jobs have been created; the indirect economic benefits are estimated at a multiplier value of up to 1.51. Cost and other efficiencies achieved include: retailers receive their payments promptly since stores, partners and WFP no longer need to manually collect and re-count the vouchers before payment; refugees are no longer required to travel distances to receive assistance or spend time queuing for rations each month; the time and costs of the logistics required for large-scale in-kind distributions are eliminated; and some operational costs are being borne by private sector partners. The risk of diversion and fraud has been significantly reduced by this electronic system and, because beneficiaries are able to use the voucher more flexibly to meet their own nutritional needs, they are less likely to sell the voucher to pay for other items. This system has enabled increased choice for beneficiaries whilst still maintaining a degree of control by WFP and partners, which was preferable for some donors and national governments who are concerned at the high risk of diversion prevalent in a large-scale unconditional cash programme.

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## Innovation

This programme is a paradigm innovation: it is the largest single conditional cash e-card system that WFP has implemented globally and has been transformational for the broader inter-agency response. The programme offers a more dignified approach that is responsive to the needs and experiences of beneficiaries, whilst also securing cost and programmatic efficiencies, and harnessing the capacity of local market economies across the sub-region. The system also has important potential for enhancing national social protection programmes.



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## Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The programme is now largely rolled out across the region. Key lessons learnt include: using varying sizes of retailers (this facilitates greater access for beneficiaries although there are also challenges in maintaining standardised costs), ensuring an effective communication and complaints mechanism for beneficiaries (e.g. hotlines), and ensuring continuous investment in monitoring and evaluation. The logical extension of this system is a single-use e-card that can be uploaded with conditional and unconditional cash and vouchers to provide assistance across different sectors (e.g. shelter, non-food items (NFIs), health, etc.). The technical system to support this (with multiple 'wallets' that can be uploaded by different organisations) has been developed and inter-agency discussions on the administrative, financial and legal aspects are ongoing. If rolled out, this 'one-card' system could ensure a simplified, more cost efficient way of reaching beneficiaries with multi-sectoral assistance. National governments are an important partner at the policy level in cash-based programmes, including in relation to the regulatory framework for banking and the retail sector.



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## Resources required

The cost structures for e-vouchers versus in-kind food are very different and therefore challenging to compare. For example, costs associated with monitoring an e-card system are higher, as additional data such as commodity specific prices are required, whilst costs such as staffing and standing up of warehouses, as well as transportation, are eliminated. Other resources include the in-shop devices to scan the cards and a data management system to record and monitor use of the e-cards.





### Expected challenges and risks

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Non-competitive markets and price spikes, particularly in more remote areas where there are fewer retailers; fraud or poor implementation by retailers; and monetization of the vouchers by beneficiaries are all key risks. Protection risks are similar to those with in-kind assistance. The system may be more challenging to implement in areas where digital banking is not as prevalent. The greatest challenge is sustaining funding for such a large-scale cash programme and, related to this, determining appropriate exit strategies given the limited access to livelihoods for refugees across the sub-region.



### Risk mitigation measures

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Continuous monitoring of local markets is essential to take timely action to mitigate negative impact on markets or prices. Further coordination with aid actors providing assistance in shelter and other sectors is required to minimise the instances of beneficiaries selling vouchers on for cash. The risk of fraud by retailers can be addressed through instituting clear procedures to cancel contracts (the shop-based point of sales equipment can be stopped immediately if information is received that may indicate irregularities). Securing national policy changes that allow greater access to livelihoods as well as increased support to livelihood generation may address risks relating to the short-term nature of funding for such programmes.

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## UNHCR's Refugee Cash Programming with Biometrics: *Targeted, cost-effective cash assistance for basic needs, food and health*

8.2



Partnership



NGO  
IRD



Cairo-Amman  
Bank



World Bank

### Objectives

Assist vulnerable refugee households with cash assistance in a way that maximizes their normalcy, dignity, flexibility and security; maintains household assets; and reduces exposure to negative coping mechanisms.



### Project Description

Drawing on the increased acceptance and sophistication of cash-based assistance systems in refugee operations, UNHCR in Jordan has developed a state-of-the-art cash assistance system, which is fully secured through biometric identity verification (iris scanning) to prevent fraud. This means that UNHCR's cash delivery mechanism does not require ATM cards or PIN codes. As of December 2014, as a first step, UNHCR Jordan was providing 23,200 families (21,000 Syrian and 2,200 of Iraqi, Sudanese and Somali nationalities) with monthly cash assistance ranging from USD \$75 to USD \$400, depending on family size and vulnerability.

The programme has been carefully scaled over the last two years by targeting refugees based on individual assessments. Despite the fact that there are more than half a million registered refugees dispersed across Jordan, UNHCR in close collaboration with its partner International Relief and Development (IRD) has managed to conduct individual assessments based on home visits for all cases. Between 2012 and 2014 over 187,000 visits were undertaken. This wealth of information was then used by a case management committee to determine eligibility based on predefined criteria. Eligibility is re-assessed at regular intervals (12 months at the most) and process and impact are continuously measured by quarterly post-distribution monitoring (PDM) exercises.



The programme is unrivalled in terms of cost-effectiveness and efficiency in UNHCR's current operations worldwide. Cash transfers allow UNHCR to implement directly rather than to sub-contract work and has resulted in overhead of less than three per cent.



### Good Practice

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Cash assistance is critical in order to enhance the protection of refugees, particularly in non-camp settings. Protection is first and foremost ensured by not stigmatising the refugee through, for example, distribution of in-kind assistance at designated centres. Since urban refugees are rarely assisted with shelter support, contrary to refugees in camp settings, cash assistance enables them to secure their dwelling and household and avoid exploitation. By using an ATM rather than vouchers refugees maintain a sense of normalcy and dignity as well as a higher level of security than they would with vouchers.

The programme is cost effective, with low administrative (3%) and transaction (1.5%) fees. Moreover, the level of assistance is carefully calibrated to ensure that cash assistance is a cash complement and livelihood support. UNHCR Post-Distribution Monitoring reports (PDMs) show that the appropriate usage of cash assistance is high, with 98% of the assistance is spent on basic needs ranging from rent (84%) to children's needs (8%) to food and health (8%).

The programme benefits from collaboration with the World Bank for a pilot on welfare modelling, which help improved the accuracy of which beneficiaries are included in the programme. This is further discussed in the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) elsewhere in this compendium.



### Innovation

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The cash biometrics combined with the accuracy of the targeting approach makes this a process innovation, changing how services are delivered. UNHCR's cash assistance was able to reduce the number of refugees living below the poverty line by 10% across Jordan and in certain Governorates, such as Amman, by up to 15%. The emphasis on the assistance itself often overlooks the additional benefits of this type of programme that is achieved at the same time, in terms of protection of refugees and maintaining their dignity. Additionally, accuracy is high with only 1% of applicants excluded in error and 4.7% included in error.

## Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

Cash assistance effectively makes any refugee a customer and participant in a market, who is able to act and make decisions as any other citizen of their country of refugee would. Certainly, cash assistance projects – even if they are as advanced as UNHCR’s Jordan programme – can always be improved. One avenue that is currently being worked on by UNHCR in close collaboration with the World Bank is to move away from the resource-intensive case management approach of the decision-making and to apply instead a system of modelling with safeguards. This would ensure good targeting based on minimal information that can be collected during registration with UNHCR, which includes biodata, information about the family composition, professional, educational and social background as well as current location. It would eliminate the need for, and overhead of, a home visit – and mitigate any exclusion errors through safeguards (including a home visit) and an appeals system.

As the crisis is evolving from an emergency response to a protracted situation, closer connection to national partners with the goal of national leadership at the level of the delivery mechanism, is important to UNHCR. This means identifying and enhancing national structures that can and are prepared to take on the management of such a system. Thus, future efforts will be even more closely connected to the leadership of the Government of Jordan in the registration of refugees.



## Resources required

The resources required to manage the system are fairly basic. It requires a list management team and database, mass information capacity as well as monitoring and evaluation capacity. The entire setup has to be underwritten by a stand-alone appeals mechanism or be effectively incorporated in existing appeals mechanisms. The main challenge in terms of resources is to maintain such a large-scale programme in terms of funding support from donors (public, private or individual).





### Expected challenges and risks

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The key risk at the current scale of the programme is that donor support may drop significantly, thereby requiring significant assistance cuts across an already vulnerable beneficiary population. This would be accompanied by serious mass information and appeals challenges in order to ensure fairness and transparency of the process. Additionally, the technology itself could be refined. Refugees consistently report that at a rate of around 95% that the service had functioned without any disruptions or problems. While this may sound like a high number, for a family with scarce resources, one failure in 20 attempts may put a family at risk of not having basic resources when needed.



### Risk mitigation measures

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Identification of the most vulnerable subsets of the current beneficiary population as well as a contingency plan for implementation if funding commitments do not materialize. Secondly, UNHCR is conducting a study and refining its Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) work in order to understand the most vulnerable beneficiaries this in more detail from 2015 and to tailor contingency plans.

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# Harnessing New Technology

## Principles

- Integrated, adaptive, systems approach; ethical innovation; privacy and data protection; undertaking risk analyses

## Projects

- **9.1** UNICEF's Pi For Learning Initiative in Lebanon: Supporting education for vulnerable children with new and creative tools
- **9.2** International Rescue Committee's regional Commodity Tracking System: Delivering aid whilst increasing accountability
- **9.3** UNDP's Information Management and Analysis Support (IMAS) Initiative: Analysing needs and critical risks for longer-term, resilience and stabilization efforts

## Background

Information Technology is playing a transformative role in the emergency and longer-term response in the sub-region but it poses challenges and risks as well as offering significant benefits. At worst, information technology can be used to inadvertently or deliberately exacerbate local tensions or conflict, and violating data privacy and protection standards can place individuals or local communities at great physical risk. When guided by good practice principles, however, information technology can build on local capacities to foster social cohesion and strengthen the resilience of households, communities, institutions and systems.

The following good practice principles can support international organisations in maximising the benefits and minimising the risks in using information technology to support programming responses in this sub-region.

## Good Practice Principles and Innovative Approaches

***Integrated, adaptive, systems approach:*** In complex crises understanding the dynamics between multiple actors and being able to understand or “see” the whole system is essential in order to create effective interventions and initiatives. Complex systems are dynamic and interventions need to be adapted as the system changes. Engaging and collaborating with multiple actors (at all levels) can allow the whole system to engage and create more effective solutions that are informed by on-the-ground realities and a deeper understanding of beneficiary and stakeholder needs. Information can be integrated from multiple sources, costs can be shared and the result is often more sustainable because of increased (local) ownership and win-win solutions.

***“Ethical innovation”:*** UNICEF proposes an ethical framework to bridge the worlds of technology and international development. This overarching framework emphasizes that information technology should be participatory and sustainable, humanistic and non-hierarchical. A number of key elements are presented as part of this framework:<sup>57</sup> Design with the user; Understand the existing ecosystem; Design for scale; Build for sustainability; Be data driven; Use open standards, open data, open source, and open innovation; Reuse and improve; Be collaborative; and Do no harm. In general an ‘open’ standard is one that is publicly available and can be freely adopted, implemented and extended.

***Privacy and Data Protection:*** Perhaps one of the greatest risks related to use of information technology, particularly in such a complex conflict context, is misuse of personal data and information. The principle of Open Data, which is gaining momentum in the sub-region, can run counter to protection of beneficiaries and local partners. All organisations collecting personal data should place significant emphasis on maintaining data privacy, protection and security. The International Committee of the Red Cross’s (ICRC) Protocols on Data Privacy, Protection and Security provide concrete, operational guidelines on data-sharing and informed consent in conflict zones –summarised in the box below.

***Undertaking risk analyses:*** Even the best, most transformative information technology is unlikely to meet all aspects of data protection and security. Consequently, good and innovative use of information technology should begin with a risk analysis and development of a risk mitigation strategy.

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57 Fabian, C. and Fabricant, R. (2014), “The Ethics of Innovation”.

## ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work

### *Select guidelines on Managing Sensitive Protection Information*

- Organizations must only collect information when necessary for the design or implementation of specified activities. This information may not be used for other purposes without additional consent.
- Systematic information collection must only be carried out by organizations with the capacity, skills, information management systems and necessary protocols in place.
- Organizations collecting and handling information containing personal details must do so in accordance with the rules and principles of international law and other relevant regional or national laws on individual data protection.
- Organizations seeking information bear the responsibility to assess threats to the persons providing information, and to take necessary measures to avoid negative consequences for those from whom they are seeking information.
- Organizations setting up systematic information collection through the Internet or other media must analyse the different potential risks linked to the collection, sharing or public display of the information and adapt the way they collect, manage and publicly release the information accordingly.
- Organizations should systematically review the information collected in order to confirm that it is reliable, accurate, and updated.
- Organizations should be explicit as to the level of reliability and accuracy of information they use or share.
- Security safeguards appropriate to the sensitivity of the information must be in place prior to any collection of information, to ensure protection from loss or theft, unauthorized access, disclosure, copying, use or modification, in any format in which it is kept.
- Organizations should establish formal procedures on the information handling process, from collection to exchange and archiving or destruction.

Source: ICRC (2013a), "Professional Standards for Protection Work: Carried Out by Humanitarian and Human Rights Actors in Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence".

The two examples below demonstrate some of the good practices discussed above.



## UNICEF's Pi For Learning Initiative in Lebanon: *Supporting education for vulnerable children with new and creative tools*



- IQRA Education
- Beyond Association
- Mouvement Sociale
- AVSI
- IEA

### Objectives

Provide non-formal educational support to vulnerable refugee children, using a low cost and open source Raspberry Pi based computer.



### Project Description

UNICEF and IEA (International Education Association) procured 100 Raspberry Pi computers as a learning tool for 300 children during their summer school pilot phase "Pi for Learning program" (Pi4L). This non-formal education programme targeted children who could not access formal schooling and was implemented through classes given in four computer rooms established in community centres and informal settlements and run by NGOs, Beyond Association, Mouvement Sociale, IRQA and AVSI. UNICEF developed an all-in-one computer based on the Raspberry Pi (which is about the size of a credit card) together with a keyboard, mouse and screen for circa USD \$150. It is primarily used as a tool to teach children basic skills and computer programming, using a visual programming language called Scratch. Being a visual programming language, children find it easier to grasp the basic concepts and can quickly create their own programs. The Raspberry Pi can run programs like a normal computer, can have cameras attached to it, and can even stream high-definition video to a monitor. Electricity is needed to power the unit but it can be used offline. UNICEF has added other educational software to their units such as Khan Academy Lite, which is an open source, free, and offline education program developed by Foundation for Learning Equality. It provides courses in maths, science, computing, and literacy and has been translated into Arabic. The Raspberry Pi is a technology in use in schools across the United States and United Kingdom.





### Good Practice

The Raspberry Pi is proving to be a flexible non-formal learning tool that can complement the formal curriculum in refugee hosting countries. The KALite platform that UNICEF added allows teachers and students to remain connected, even if they are in different locations. The skills children learn through the programme have practical application in the formal curriculum (e.g. maths) and will also be invaluable as they enter the labour market when they finish school. Many of the participating children are extremely vulnerable and this type of creative learning, in their communities, can build confidence, creative thinking, collaborative skills and independence. A number of teachers have been trained (by IEA) and the computer units are relatively robust and are repaired on location, thereby increasing the sustainability of the project outcomes. An evaluation of the Raspberry Pi programme, including this project in Lebanon, is being conducted by the College of Teachers (based in London) and the results are due in January 2015.



### Innovation

The Raspberry Pi Computer developed by UNICEF Lebanon represents a product innovation. The computer is relatively inexpensive, robust and user-friendly and teaches practical skills in a creative way. The Pi4L programme is an innovation in teaching using this computer. Perhaps uniquely, this programme creates a degree of parity with students in more stable, developed countries.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The project is designed for scale and sustainability - the project team is currently seeking endorsement from the Ministry of Education in Lebanon to mainstream the new technology and process in formal schools across the country. It is highly replicable across the sub-region, with minimal adjustments required. The low cost of the units means that the programme could enable more hands-on learning of computers in public school curricula for the benefit of all students.



### Resources required

**RESOURCES REQUIRED:** The principal costs involved in this project are the procurement of the computers (currently USD \$150 per unit) and, in some cases, the construction of dedicated rooms to use for classes. Training of teachers is crucial to ensure effective use of this learning tool when used in a classroom environment, but the project also aims to reach single learners who have no access to teachers or classrooms.

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### Expected challenges and risks

Identifying existing infrastructure to set up the dedicated computer rooms may be difficult and children may use the device for a few months and then get bored. Introducing the technology in other environments will also present other challenges, but the technology is designed to adapt to the environment if needed.



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### Risk mitigation measures

Creating a physical space in which classes can be held mitigates the burden on existing school facilities; and ensuring varied use and programming content helps keep children interested in the computer and related classes.



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# 9.2

## International Rescue Committee's regional Commodity Tracking System: *Delivering aid whilst increasing accountability*



**Private**

- **SoukTel, a Palestinian company based in Ramallah** (worked on the 1st & 2nd versions of the CTS)
- **The Cactus Group, based in North Carolina** (the current partner)

### Objectives



Remotely track the delivery of supplies within Syria, and to refugees in neighbouring countries.

### Project Description



The IRC, like most INGOs, is not in position to deliver medical and other supplies to its programmes in Syria due to security concerns, so, in line with UN Security Council Resolutions 2161 and 2191, it works with several local partners that pick up the IRC's shipments at border points in Turkey, Iraq and Jordan and delivers them to the intended locations inside the country. The CTS<sup>58</sup> enables the IRC to track the movement of all humanitarian supplies from despatch to destination, thus allowing the organization to determine whether and when the intended recipients receive their supplies. Every IRC package within a shipment is tagged with a unique "QR" code<sup>59</sup>. The IRC's local partners use GPS-enabled smartphones with dedicated software to scan these shipments as they are taken across the border to various distribution points. This data is then automatically encrypted and securely uploaded to the IRC's server in a

58 The CTS is linked to needs assessment conducted by IRC Syrian staff in each governorate under an initiative called 'Estijaaba' (Arabic for 'response'). These teams perform data collection using an Android-based mobile device that runs the ODK Collect app (the Open Data Kit is a free and open source data collection tool), which uploads completed forms to IRC's server, to carry out their assigned assessments. Data collection occurs offline but relies on wireless Internet to upload completed forms. Each individual uploads their geo-tagged results on a weekly basis.

59 A QR Code (Quick Response Code) is a "matrix" barcode (or two-dimensional barcode).

standardized format. IRC does not capture or keep any personal identifying information (PII) in the process. They also explicitly instruct their transporters and partners who scan packages or collect electronic data to not install SIMs in the mobile devices so that their location cannot be triangulated. The QR Code system allows for quick and easy tracking of the shipment while on route. Intended recipients confirm the receipt of shipments via email, Skype, or scanned stamped documents, thus providing an additional level of assurance to the tracking system. The IRC is currently implementing a mapping solution that will eventually provide logistics support in addition to greatly enhanced real-time dashboards/maps of CTS shipments.

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### Good Practice

IRC's CTS reflects several good practices. It promotes accountability, transparency and improved reporting to donors. A comprehensive risk assessment was conducted prior to commencement of the system and appropriate mitigating measures have been incorporated, including data protection measures and security of local partners. In terms of cost efficiencies, the initial investment required for the system was relatively low.<sup>60</sup> The system works primarily through local partners and builds on the high literacy (including technology literacy) in Syria as well as the wide prevalence of Android phones.<sup>61</sup> The CTS enables IRC to take more timely, data-driven decisions, thereby minimizing aid losses and ensuring supplies reach vulnerable populations quickly and efficiently.



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### Innovation

This system is a paradigm innovation: it has adopted and modified technology used in the private sector (by shipping firms such as Aramex, DHL) to provide a safe and effective way to track movement of aid supplies to intended destinations – thereby increasing efficiencies as well as accountability.



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<sup>60</sup> This initial investment included three weeks of the IRC's Solutions Architect's time, plus time and materials for a software engineer (supplied by SoukTel); the development of CTS versions 2 and 3 received incrementally more funds from IRC donors, with the total cost of version 3 coming in at USD \$140,000, which includes a year of post-deployment hosting, support and maintenance.

<sup>61</sup> The software and QR code scanning would also work on other smartphones such as iPhones.



### Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

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The CTS is highly replicable in refugee responses in the sub-region. It creates a more transparent and efficient management and distribution system for in-kind assistance across large geographic areas. Replication in the refugee response would not require any particular modifications to the system but would require training for staff and local partners.



### Resources required

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Resources required are relatively minimal: staff and local partners need to be trained in the using the system; mobile phones and scanning equipment need to be procured and distributed. IRC is now working on making CTS available to the wider humanitarian community under an open source license.<sup>62</sup>



### Expected challenges and risks

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In the sub-regional context, there is some risk of local partners 'gaming' the system and being able to divert supplies. Access to Internet and mobile networks may also not be optimal in some more remote areas.



### Risk mitigation measures

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Many of the risks posed can be mitigated through detailed training of staff and local partners, through close monitoring of the data provided and through keeping the operating system (e.g. the phone scanners) as simple as possible. Undertaking a broader risk assessment prior to commencing the programme would also identify other risks pertinent to specific contexts and help inform necessary mitigating measures.

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<sup>62</sup> This is possible because IRC used open source software to develop the system, which means they can easily modify, customize and extend the software whenever required.

## UNDP's Information Management and Analysis Support (IMAS) Initiative: Analysing needs and critical risks for longer-term, resilience and stabilization efforts

9.3



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• UNRCO  
• UNDP Lebanon



• PCM  
• MoSA  
• MoIM

### Objectives

Enhance the capacity of key government actors to a) produce context-specific, situationally-aware, cross-sectoral, multi-actor, stabilization and resilience (S&R) strategic analysis and to b) better prioritize and coordinate information and stabilization/resilience-building activities with government, UN agencies, (I)NGOs and donors by providing an *information management and analysis support (IMAS) toolkit* and setting-up a national IMAS team.



### Project Description

The IMAS in Lebanon began by compiling data related to stabilization & resilience (S&R) efforts from UN, Government, NGO, and private sector sources, and integrating it into the *Lebanon Atlas* produced by the IMAS team with geo-referenced datasets. Current data includes resources (e.g. hospitals, schools), risks (e.g. open dumpsites, flood plains) and refugee population at camps/settlements. It is updated regularly using a metadata tracking tool. By integrating these and other datasets the IMAS team has created a dynamic system of key social risk/vulnerability mapping and monitoring to quickly analyse needs and critical risks for longer-term, resilience and stabilization efforts.



A second component of the IMAS system is a national *Aid Coordination Portal and Dashboard (Lebanon Aid)*, also run and hosted by CDR, integrating the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs Financial Tracking Service (OCHA FTS) tracking data for the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), and a development aid component (set up and maintained by CDR, with UNDP/UNRCO support).

The detailed mapping of critical risks and associated problems and needs in the most vulnerable municipalities in Lebanon has been carried out by Ministry of Social Affairs, with support from UNDP, through the *Municipal Risk and Resources Mapping (MRR)* process, in order to provide critical input to the resilience/ stabilization joint analysis and programming, and as a baseline for integrated monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. This MRR data has been integrated with the Lebanon Digital Atlas through the integrated *IMAS Toolkit*, as a key analysis, planning and monitoring support component.

Finally, the *IMAS Toolkit* also incorporates a *4Ws (Who, What, Where, When) tool*, that allows for online, real-time project and activity tracking, with an integrated mapping tool that allows dynamic filtering and display of all the various components of the Toolkit as needed: 4Ws, MRR, Aid tracking and Digital Atlas.



### Good Practice

The IMAS Toolkit and support system is a critically useful component of post-crisis recovery and development planning. It puts in place systems and tools to collect, manage and help analyse the data needed to design resilience-enhancing, well-targeted, effectively coordinated interventions that can be tracked and evaluated in close-to-real-time. By taking a comprehensive, systems view of risks and resources and integrating previously separate data sources, the resulting product is more useful than any single component.

The IMAS initiative collaborates with key actors and gives all stakeholders access to broader, more integrated information that helps each partner make more accurate, informed decisions. The collaboration includes a cost-sharing component and a user cost-benefit analysis that seeks to assure a win-win situation for all actors who choose to participate in the information sharing systems through IMAS, thereby promoting their long-term sustainability.

The Information Management and Analysis Support (IMAS) dramatically reduces duplication of efforts, increases effectiveness in stabilization initiatives and increases access and accuracy of S&R information. This improves integrated strategic analysis for interventions, particularly about violence/ security tracking and conflict risk analysis.

## Innovation

The Information Management and Analysis Support initiative is a paradigm innovation. It takes a whole-systems view of the issues facing communities and it integrates the efforts of multiple stakeholders working on longer-term, resilience and stabilization efforts. In doing so, the resulting, comprehensive, interactive, real-time data leads to new insights into sources and solutions for vulnerable populations. It provides a new perspective that can lead to innovative solutions and improved decision-making. Further, the collaborative process reduces costs, increases sustainability, and increases value for all partners.



## Lessons learned for scaling up or replication

The IMAS was designed for scale, intended as a regional initiative for the Syria-crisis affected countries to facilitate regional stability in the Middle East. However, due to initial budgetary restrictions, the IMAS initiative focused its initial development and roll-out in Lebanon. The key lesson learned so far is that tools such as IMAS, which are designed to support analysis and planning in complex crises, should ideally be supported at a supra-national, regional or international, level so that the fixed development costs are not too heavy for one country to bear, and also because information-sharing at regional level can enhance its support to stabilization and resilience planning in the region.



## Resources required

The IMAS Toolkit is now developed and available for implementation in other countries, essentially license-free to all development partners, UN, NGOs, governments and donors. Information management professionals will be needed in each country to tailor the IMAS to that country's needs and support the government and partners in implementing and administering the system.

In a region where the IMAS is implemented, a small, common IMAS development team should be set-up to support country roll-outs, upgrade the Toolkit as needed, share innovations with all users, and carry out region-specific adaptations, in a *hub-and-spoke development and implementation arrangement* between the small central hub team and country-based teams, which provides for greater efficiency, reduces development costs, and facilitates faster innovation and distribution throughout the network.





### Expected challenges and risks

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The key challenge for the IMAS is to ensure corporate-level engagement from the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO), strategic UN partners, and key donors, to use the IMAS approach as an integral part of their standard crisis response strategy. There is a risk that funding or political pressures would continue the status quo of working in silos (country-by-country), rather than to set-up a hub-and-spoke development and support team in each region to maximize efficient use of resources in IMAS implementation wherever useful and needed.



### Risk mitigation measures

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The IMAS initiative has mitigated risks by working country-by-country to develop the initial systems and tools and encouraging learning between countries and support on a broader level for a regional approach. While this increases investment costs for initial IMAS roll-out, it can hopefully lead to a regional information system in response to the Syria crisis.

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For more information, visit: Information Management and Analysis Support (IMAS) Toolkit: <http://www.rcoimtools.com/fts/>

Reference material added to resource list:

Information Management and Analysis Support (IMAS) Toolkit: <http://www.rcoimtools.com/fts/>

Other reference material (forthcoming – not added to list)

See upcoming DOCO blog article: Real-time data analysis in times of crisis: the IMAS Toolkit





## Annex

# Summary of Criteria to Identify and Assess Good and Innovative Practices

## Strengthening Resilience

The identification of good and innovative practices will be framed foremost in terms of their contribution to *“support[ing] communities and institutions to respond to increased demand and pressure (characterized as “coping”), promot[ing] household recovery from the negative impacts of the crisis (“recovering”) and strengthen[ing] local and national economic, social systems to protect development gains from current and future shocks (“transforming”).”*<sup>63</sup>

## Cross-cutting Issues

- Use of local knowledge and/or resources in programme design and implementation;
- Involvement of the government/municipalities in programme design and/or implementation;
- Potential for national/local government leadership/ownership<sup>64</sup>; and
- Strong partnerships, including with the private sector and other non-traditional aid actors.

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<sup>63</sup> UNDG (2014), “A Resilience-based Development Response to the Syria Crisis: A Position Paper”.

<sup>64</sup> These criteria will be used in the analysis and assessment of scalability and replicability.

## 'Good Practice' Criteria

Standard evaluation criteria are drawn from OECD-DAC guidelines that have subsequently been integrated into aid practice. These are:

- **Effectiveness (and coverage<sup>65</sup>):** Measures the extent to which the activity achieves progress toward its stated objective. This includes consideration of how target populations were selected and the degree to which they were reached.
- **Efficiency:** Measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs (including costs, resources, time).
- **Impact:** Looks at the wider effects of the project – social, economic, technical, environmental – on individuals, communities, and institutions. Impacts can be immediate and long-term, intended and unintended, positive and negative, macro (sector) and micro (household).
- **Relevance (and flexibility):** Measures the degree to which the activity addresses the needs and priorities as identified by the intended beneficiaries. This also includes consideration of how flexible or adaptable an activity or practice has been in relation to changes in the context, feedback from intended beneficiaries, evaluations, etc.
- **Sustainability (and connectedness<sup>66</sup>):** Measures whether an activity or its impact is likely to continue after the international implementing agency has scaled down/withdrawn and/or donor funding has ended.

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65 This refers to the need “to reach major population groups facing life-threatening suffering wherever they are, providing them with assistance and protection proportionate to their need and devoid of extraneous political agendas” (Minear, L. (1994), “The International Relief System: A Critical Review”). It is also linked to ‘effectiveness’, since objectives in humanitarian action often refer to numbers or percentages of population to be assisted/reached (see ALNAP (2006), “Evaluation Humanitarian Assistance Using the OECD-DAC Criteria: An ALNAP Guide for Humanitarian Agencies”).

66 This refers to the need “to assure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context which takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account” (Minear, L. (1994), “The International Relief System: A Critical Review”).

## 'Innovative Practice' Criteria

Criteria will include four broad categories of innovation (put forward by ALNAP and others), as follows:

1. "Product innovation" – changes in the products and/or services that an organization offers;
2. "Process innovation" – changes in the ways products and services are designed or delivered;
3. "Position innovation" – changes in how products/services are framed and communicated; and
4. "Paradigm innovation" – changes in the underlying models which shape what an organization does.<sup>67</sup>

In addition, 'working' criteria developed for the World Humanitarian Summit will also be used. These are:

- "Doing things better or in new ways"
- "Fresh thinking that creates value (recognizing the need for new but also focusing on the impact)"
- "Creative problem solving (recognizing that it is not just about novelty but results/benefits)"
- "Process for adaptation and improvement"
- "New models that realize breakthroughs"<sup>68</sup>

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67 ALNAP (2009b), "Innovations in International Humanitarian Action: Background Paper".

68 World Humanitarian Summit (2014b), "Approach Paper - WHS Theme 3: Transformation through Innovation".

## Public documentation/ information reviewed<sup>69</sup>



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