

HIGHLIGHTS

- Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees results for 2017.
- Lebanon Humanitarian Fund holds a Donor Meeting to raise awareness and discuss future steps.
- An Aرسال Action Plan is developed by the humanitarian community, refugees, and local authorities.
- Funding received toward the LCRP in 2017 remains low in comparison to 2016.

FIGURES

(As of 30 June 2017)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| # of estimated refugees | 1,500,000 |
| # of registered refugees | 1,001,051 |
| # of returnees | 35,000 |
| # of Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) | 32,000 |
| # of Palestine Refugees from Lebanon (PRL) | 277,985 |
| # of vulnerable Lebanese | 1,500,000 |
| Total Lebanese population | 4,400,000 |

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World Food Day | 16 October 2017



World Food Day Ceremony. Source: FAO

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This issue puts a spotlight on the Donor Meeting, aimed at strengthening relations between the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund's current and previous donors, and collecting first-hand feedback from potential donors. In addition, it provides an update on the latest results of the 2017 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR), and looks at an Action Plan for Aرسال being developed by the humanitarian community, local authorities, and refugees. Finally, this issue gives an overview of funding for Lebanon in the third quarter of 2017, and tells the story of a vulnerable refugee woman who benefited from cash assistance.

Living conditions of refugees degrade in 2017

Preliminary findings of the 2017 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees are released

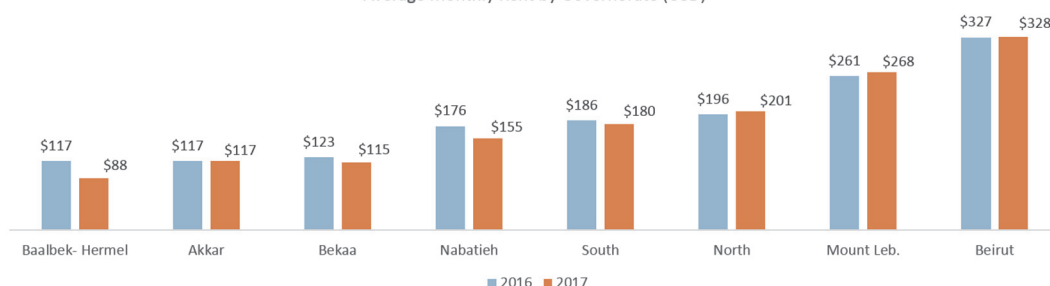
The preliminary findings of the 2017 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR), the annual survey of Syrian refugee households in Lebanon, were presented to the humanitarian community in October. The VASyR has been conducted on a yearly basis since 2013, and it intends to provide valuable insight into refugees' living conditions and trends. VASyR is an essential process to shape planning decisions and programme design, and its findings are incorporated into the humanitarian agencies' programming including the 2017 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP).

Poverty and vulnerability persist

VASyR 2017 reflected an increased level of poverty and a high debt rate among Syrian refugees. The share of households living below the poverty line (US\$ <3.84 per capita per day) increased from 71 per cent in 2016 to 76 per cent in 2017. 58 per cent of refugee households have a total per capita expenditure that falls below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), a measure of items deemed essential for a household's survival. While households with high debts remained stable, the percentage of households borrowing money remained extremely high, at 87 per cent.

Legal residency remains a challenge for refugees, whereby the high cost of residency permit renewals and an inability to find a Lebanese sponsor are major impediments which further compound refugees' vulnerability. The survey reveals that only 31 per cent of

Average Monthly Rent by Governorate (USD)



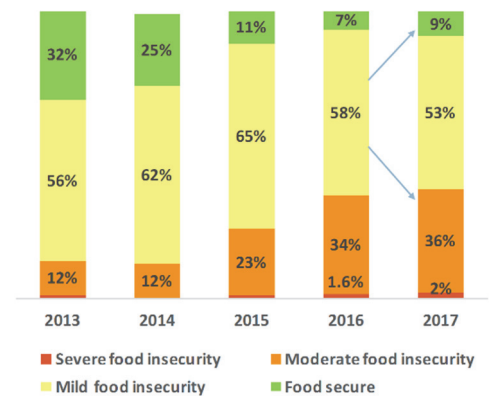
refugee households have at least one member holding a legal residency permit. In an attempt to address this, the General Security Office (GSO) waived, in February 2017, the renewal and overstay fees of legal residency (\$200 per person per year) for Syrian refugees who were registered with UNHCR before 1 January 2015 and who had not renewed their residency previously based on tourism, sponsorship, property ownership or tenancy in 2015 or 2016. The obstacles to obtain legal residency can impact the mobility of refugees and thus limit their access to livelihoods opportunities and essential services.

The ongoing pressure on the housing market means that the most vulnerable have limited access to affordable and adequate housing: 17 per cent of Syrian refugees live in informal settlements, 9 per cent in non-residential buildings and 73 per cent in residential buildings, with 4 per cent of all refugees' shelters ranked as being in dangerous condition. Overcrowding among refugees is on the increase, at 33 per cent in 2017 compared to 27 per cent in 2016. 80 per cent of Syrian refugees are renting. A slight decrease in the average cost of rent was observed for 2017, at \$183 per month, down from \$189 in 2016.

Lebanon's hospitals and health centres have been overburdened by the sudden increase in utilization, which has also greatly affected their infra-structure. Refugees' need to access primary health care in the last six months remained similar to 2016, at 46 per cent; 11 per cent did not get the care they needed due to an inability to cover doctors' fees.

Food Insecurity remains high

Food insecurity remained stable over the past year with 91 per cent of Syrian refugee households presenting some level of food insecurity, a decrease of 2 per cent compared to 2016. Food insecurity is mainly associated with high economic vulnerability and limited income-earning opportunities. Limited income sources remained one of the underlying causes of food insecurity, with 40 per cent of refugee households reporting World Food Programme (WFP) assistance as among their three main sources of income. Worryingly, 28 per cent of households reported WFP assistance as their primary source. Female-headed households remained more vulnerable than their male counterparts. In addition, debt levels remain very high for refugee households in 2017, where approximately three quarters of households borrowed money to buy food.



Only 31 per cent of refugee households have at least one member holding a legal residency permit; the reasons for illegal residency are mainly cost and not being able to find a Lebanese sponsor.

Education

Almost half of all school-age Syrian refugee children (3-18) are not attending school (49 per cent). There are some signs of progress though – an 11 per cent increase in primary school attendance was observed, up from 52 per cent in 2016 to 63 per cent in 2017. The percentage of women aged between 15 and 19 years currently married or in union is 22 per cent. Finally, almost 8 per cent of youth reported working regularly.

Lebanon Humanitarian Fund seeks contributions

Discussions focus on achievements and future prospects

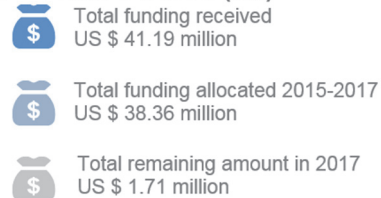
The Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) held a donor meeting on 24 October to showcase its achievements and discuss its future. The Fund currently has US\$1.7 million and aims to scale it up to \$20 million for 2018.

The Donor Meeting, which was chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator, was intended to raise awareness on the Fund's situation, strengthen relations with current and previous donors, and collect first-hand feedback from potential donors. The meeting also highlighted the Fund's achievements in supporting the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon

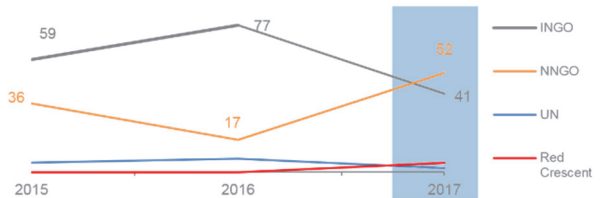
The LHF is supporting national NGOs more proactively than ever in 2017, with more than half its funding going to them.

through quick, flexible and strategic allocations. Three local NGOs presented live testimonies on how the Fund's support enabled them to offer solutions to emergencies and address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable communities. In addition to supporting strategic areas identified by the various sectors under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, the Fund is supporting national NGOs more proactively than ever in 2017, with more than half of its funding going to them.

FUNDING STATUS (\$M)



% OF ALLOCATION BY TYPE OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNER



LHF prioritizes People with Specific Needs and other marginalized groups

This year, the LHF funded 21 partners to implement 23 projects through a standard and a reserve allocation amounting to \$5.4 million. The allocations fulfilled the LHF's strategic focus to support People with Specific Needs, such as disabled and older persons, and individuals with mental health issues. The implemented projects also targeted marginalized groups and groups at risk, supported activities to respond to evictions, and bridged critical humanitarian funding gaps that were threatening the continuity of existing programmes.

Humanitarians developing Action Plan for Arsal

One-year plan will coordinate humanitarian and development response

The humanitarian community, together with local authorities and refugees, are currently developing a one-year Action Plan for the northeastern border town of Arsal, which continues to host large numbers of refugees and faces significant needs across all sectors. The Action Plan is aligned with the strategic objectives formulated under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and aims to form part of a larger effort to tackle the humanitarian and socio-economic situation in Arsal. The plan, which is due to be finalized in mid-November, covers humanitarian, development and stabilization components. The plan aims to ensure that gaps are covered and duplication is avoided, while ensuring improved coordination and enhanced accountability toward Syrian refugees, Lebanese host communities, and local authorities. The plan also entails a protection component, which aims, among other issues, to ease communal tensions between refugees and host communities, as intercommunal relations in the area have seen significant strain in the last few months. The preparation of the plan is coordinated by UNHCR, UNDP, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the municipality.

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Despite difficulties in accessing Arsal, there has been a broad continuity of essential humanitarian services throughout the past years. In light of the improving situation in the town, several agencies are planning a more robust/long term-presence.

The security situation in Arsal has improved following the Lebanese Armed Forces operation in August, known as Fajr el-Jouroud Operation [Dawn of the Outskirts], through which they pushed ISIS fighters out of the town's outskirts.

Wastewater management has been a key driver of inter-community tensions in Arsal and is a priority for the town's local authorities and residents. To enhance social stability in a sustainable way, UNDP and UNICEF are working on addressing this infrastructure problem of a lack of waste water networks and treatment plants. The two agencies are developing a project that consists of the construction and the putting into service of a complete wastewater treatment system for Arsal, comprised of treatment facilities and an associated sewage network. This project will protect public health, safeguard the environment, and provided treated byproducts that can be used for agricultural purposes. The construction of the sewage network will also generate much-needed employment opportunities.

To compensate for the region's long years of marginalization, the Lebanese government has recently allocated US\$15 million to carry out development projects in Arsal, including investments in education and infrastructure as well as compensation for the town's farmers.

Humanitarian Coordinator meets vulnerable communities in Arsal

Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) Philippe Lazzarini visited Arsal on 9 October, along with UNHCR Representative Mireille Girard and representatives from organizations including OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, and WFP. The delegation discussed urgent local humanitarian and development needs with local authorities, who highlighted that their main priorities were the creation of job opportunities, WASH interventions, and education. The delegation also met with representatives of local Syrian councils and humanitarian workers, who relayed their concerns and needs to the HC on the importance of prioritizing education, health, food assistance, winter assistance, and livelihoods for both refugees and host communities. Finally, the delegation visited an informal settlement in the town, as well as the site of a UNDP/WFP/UNHCR water canal project.



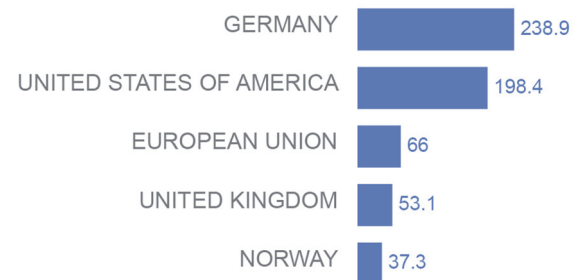
HC Lazzarini visiting Arsal Source: OCHA

Funding

Funding for LCRP 2017 is lower than last year

At the end of September 2017, resources received by implementing partners in support of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan totaled US\$729.32 million, which amounts to 27 per cent of the 2017 appeal. Comparatively, at the same time last year, \$980 million were reported received by LCRP partners, representing 40 per cent of last year's appeal.

The disbursements remain low compared to last year and are impacting ongoing programmes responding to critical needs of vulnerable refugees and host communities. This is specifically notable in the areas of shelter, health, and cash assistance for vulnerable people who rely on humanitarian partners to deliver essential and basic services. At the same time, implementing more solutions remains a concern, particularly for water services and access to quality education.



Top 5 donors. Source: UNHCR

LCRP disbursements remain low in comparison to last year and to the current needs of vulnerable refugees and host communities.

With only two months remaining in 2017, increasing support to the LCRP and the predictability of resources for 2018 and beyond is crucial. This will allow longer-term humanitarian planning and developmental approaches to ensure a successful integrated response, in a context of prevalent social tensions and increasing host community fatigue.

Zeinab's story

Home visits and medical support for a family in a desperate situation

Living in a one-room apartment with no windows, in a building that is falling apart, on Bouchrieh street in Maten district, Zeinab, a 74-year-old Syrian woman, suffers from poor health.

Like many people in a desperate situation, Zeinab especially appreciates home visits. She suffers from high blood pressure that is continually rising, as well as other complications that come along with old age. Thanks to assistance from the Helping Hands project funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund and implemented by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Lebanon, Zeinab can now buy her much-needed medication and engage once again in family life.



Zeinab, her daughter, and one of ADRA's community volunteer. Source: ADRA

Between financial strains, health complications, and safety concerns, this family cherished the help received through the Helping Hands project, which is essential for their survival.

Her family faces its share of challenges: Zeinab lives in the apartment in poor conditions with her daughter, four grandchildren, and great-granddaughter, for which they pay US\$400 per month. Without any financial support, the breadwinning and security has been left up to the teenage grandson.

In addition to all these challenges, the family's neighbourhood has been shaken by significant insecurity and religious unrest.

Zeinab's daughter expresses a desire to take her family abroad and seek asylum outside of the Middle East, adding that their hometown in Aleppo has been completely destroyed. Between financial strains, health complications, and safety concerns, this family cherishes the help received through the Helping Hands project, which is essential for their survival.

About the Helping Hands project

Assessments have found that a significant number of elderly persons above the age of 60 are vulnerable to exclusion, abuse, neglect, and increased hardships. Many are in difficult economic situations and are unable to afford the specific care they require. The Helping Hands project supports elderly people living independently in their community while protecting their dignity, wellness, and resilience. At-home care is provided according to individual needs by community volunteers through scheduled weekly home visits. The intervention is also aimed at supporting care givers so that they can maintain the capacity to care for the elderly in their community. The activities are targeted at 200 Syrian refugee and host community families living in the areas of Dekweneh, Fanar, and Boucherieh in the Metn district, which have been identified as vulnerable localities.

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