

Lebanon

Improving Human Security through Social Cohesion and Economic Empowerment of Vulnerable Refugee and Host Communities in Tripoli

Background information

Hosting over 1.5 million displaced persons from Syria, Lebanon today has the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. Tripoli, a coastal city close to the Syrian border, has seen the largest influx of Syrians into Lebanon. While initially welcoming these refugees with whom the residents of Tripoli share a long history, tensions continue to rise over competition for scarce resources in already declining and crowded neighborhoods. Limited housing and depleted infrastructure, along with lack of clean water and sanitation, inadequate access to social services, and increasing unemployment, are worsening living conditions, placing both refugee and host populations in a survival mode and contributing to higher levels of tension and inter-communal hostilities.

Goals and objectives

The overall goal of the programme is to improve the livelihood and resilience of vulnerable refugee and host communities in crisis-affected neighborhoods of Tripoli. Specifically, the programme seeks to: (i) promote income generation and economic empowerment; (ii) reduce the humanitarian impact of displacement; (iii) enhance access to social and community services; and (iv) ensure community engagement in recovery and development planning by the Municipality of Tripoli and the Government of Lebanon.



DURATION

December 2016 – September 2023



UN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, and UN WOMEN



OTHER KEY PARTNERS

Ministries of Social Affairs, Education and Health, the Municipality of Tripoli, local NGOs, and CBOs (representing refugee and host communities)



BENEFICIARIES

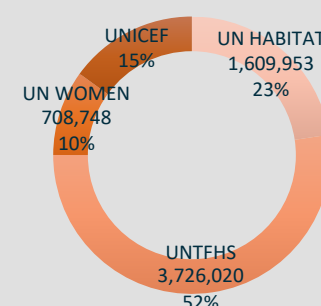
35,000



TOTAL BUDGET

US\$ 7,112,258

POOLING OF RESOURCES



Beneficiaries

The programme directly benefits young people, children, women, persons with disabilities, men, and the elderly from host and refugee communities in Tabbaneh, Jabal Mohsen, and Abu Samra who actively participate in capacity-building, counseling, and economic activities. Municipal staff, ministry officials, and representatives from local NGOs also benefit from training workshops and are integrated in the design, development and implementation of the programme. In total, more than 200,000 people living in the participating neighborhoods benefit from improved social cohesion, governance, and quality of social services.

Applying the Human Security approach

To pave the way for sustainable development and stability in Tripoli, a broad range of interconnected issues such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate urban services, and conflict prevention must be addressed comprehensively. To do so, the programme combines the application of human security with UN-Habitat's area-based approach, resulting in a multi-sectoral and context-driven neighborhood assessment that leads to the identification of priority interventions, including actions to address immediate needs, strengthen development, build resilience, and improve social cohesion in safe spaces where people can learn and improve their living conditions.

With the aim to prevent recurring crises and cycles of human insecurities, and based on multi-stakeholder solutions that combine top-down with bottom-up measures, the programme involves refugee and host communities in the design and implementation of priority interventions. Through socio-cultural hubs, such as the Abjad and Abou Samra community centers, service providers, municipal and government ministries, and local NGOs collaborate with refugee and host communities to realize positive change in the participating neighborhoods.

Based on an inclusive governance framework supported by the programme, these centers encourage community dialogue around topics that address local concerns; respond to situations of violence through awareness-raising campaigns, psycho-social support, and referral systems; empower and promote women and youth in socio-economic activities; and build synergies that improve social trust, transform inter-communal relations, and prevent the exclusion of those most vulnerable.

Partnerships and lessons learned from this initiative will help facilitate replication in other areas within and outside Tripoli where the needs and priorities of vulnerable communities can be met based on an area-based approach that is centered on human security and its application.

Achievements Phase I

- The capacities of the Abjad Community Center have been strengthened to serve as a joint hub for all beneficiaries and partners, providing a safe space for discussion and learning, and promoting social cohesion. The education, cultural, and social services of Abjad Center were expanded, while a community-based platform for case management and social care services was established. Led and managed by a grassroots NGO operating in Tripoli, and in close partnership with the municipality, the center offers multiple protection, advocacy, and conflict resolution services engaging refugees and host communities.
- The programme's case management services at the Abjad Centre supported 14 GBV survivors and reached 318 children, while GBV awareness sessions educated 200 individuals. Community-based platforms facilitated sessions on GBV awareness, self-defense, and labor market integration, reaching 270 women and girls. Economic empowerment initiatives identified job opportunities for women and youth in fields like IT and elderly care, training 150 women in various skills and securing permanent employment for 8 women.
- The programme combined these long-term development measures with humanitarian assistance. 76 front-line workers were trained in communication and advocacy, 30,000 masks and 7,000 COVID-19 informational flyers were distributed, and infrastructure improvements connected 501 families to a potable water network. These interventions have addressed immediate needs and fostered localized sustainable development and resilience in Lebanon's vulnerable communities.



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Achievements Phase II

- Phase II continued to ensure tailored interventions and continuous collaboration with local actors and agencies for resource mobilization, ultimately empowering the community and fostering resilience through training and capacity-building initiatives.
- To ensure context-specificity and local ownership, a rapid assessment was conducted in Shalfeh through the neighborhood profile methodology, covering 11 different sectors. Communities were highly integrated, featuring 16 focus group discussions involving diverse participants and key informant interviews with local authorities and stakeholders.
- The programme focused on improving access to social and basic services through community-based initiatives. The Markazouna Al Fayhaa Association's community center was rehabilitated and now promotes education and recreation. Through the community center, the programme fostered workshops and projects to be designed and implemented by the community, addressing health, and hygiene, and tackling violence, child labor, and early marriage through theatre shows, cinema events, and games.
- Notably during Phase II, youth engagement was promoted through a Cash-for-Work program, and carpentry training for women was delivered, enabling them to produce resources for the center, thereby improving their livelihoods and the sustainability of the initiative. GBV protection services reached 1,355 women with prevention and protection information. Child protection services provided case management for 88 high-risk children and psychosocial support for 199 children. The education retention support program targeted 300 students to prevent dropouts and provided psychosocial support to 342 children, complemented by positive parenting programs for 269 caregivers.
- The UNTFHS, implementing agencies, and local partners are developing the third phase of the programme, with the ultimate goal of replicating the successful approach of the Abjad and Markazouna centers, thereby enhancing the resilience of other vulnerable departments. Phase III will produce a practical toolkit aimed at equipping vulnerable communities in Lebanon with the methodology and knowledge to collectively identify and address their urgent needs, engage with local authorities and service providers, and make informed decisions based on available resources.



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