



Inter-Community Relations: A Study of the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Influx on the Lebanese Host Community and its Repercussions on the Social Cohesion Context
North and Mount Lebanon:
T5 and Chouf

A study by CARE International in Lebanon



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Background and Objectives

Since the beginning of the crisis in Syria in 2011, the influx of Syrian refugees has led to an increased pressure on natural resources and new challenges as well for host communities and local authorities. CARE International in Lebanon has undertaken a study in two of its regions of intervention, namely T5 and Chouf district in Mount Lebanon, with the main objective of studying the effects of the Syrian refugee influx in terms of access to basic services and, consequently, on social cohesion among refugee and host communities.

CARE teams collected baseline information on access to basic services for both Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities and on the perception of the impact it currently has on social cohesion among communities, acknowledging that increased pressure on local resources and public services may lead to the deterioration of living conditions for both Syrians and Lebanese, as well as to increased intercommunity tensions.

Specific objectives:

- i. To capture any change in service provision and infrastructure in local communities since the start of the Syrian refugee influx;
- ii. To determine the extent to which the change in service provision (if any) has affected inter-community relations;
- iii. To identify the needs and priorities of the host community and the Persons of Concern (PoCs) in terms of services and infrastructure; and
- iv. To study inter-community relations and assess elements of social cohesion among host and refugee communities in order to have a better understanding of the social fabric and the relations governing the two.

This information is useful to inform CARE's interventions aimed at improving access to basic services, thus contributing to a more sustainable approach where tensions are mitigated and social cohesion improved among local communities.

With these objectives in mind, information was collected on services, facilities, and infrastructure in municipalities, covering:

- ◆ electricity and power outages;
- ◆ water provision, sources, and shortages;
- ◆ sanitation networks and infrastructure;
- ◆ education
- ◆ solid waste disposal and cleanliness;
- ◆ availability of medical services and facilities
- ◆ security situation

In the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and meetings with the Key Informants and community members, participants were asked about the quality of service provision, responsiveness of the municipality to complaints and requests raised by residents, main priority needs of the communities and the main issues of concern that need to be addressed for both host communities and refugees. Perceptions of changes in access and quality of service provision since the beginning of the Syria crisis - 4 years ago- are also documented.

The impressions that Lebanese and Syrian communities have on each other were also captured, in order to understand whether negative impressions are services-related or a more deep-seated attitude. Furthermore, impressions on other actors are also noted, including the Lebanese army, local religious authorities, local and national government, UN agencies and NGOs.

Finally, the security situation in villages and the occurrence of (security) incidents since the arrival of the refugees are documented, as well as the perceptions which may lead to increased tensions and confrontations between the host and refugee communities in the near future.

Methodology

This study was conducted between July 20th and September 5th 2014 in six municipalities, three in the T5 area and three in Chouf, selected according to the highest concentration of Syrian refugees and where CARE Lebanon is implementing WASH interventions, specifically water and sanitation projects.

Table 1 : Selected Municipalities

Chouf	T5
Dalhoun	Myriata (Zgharta)
Daraya	Ardeh (Zgharta)
Anout	Qalamoun (Tripoli)

The information present in this study was collected through the following methodology:

<p>Key Informant Interviews (KII)</p>	<p>The semi-structured questionnaire covered topics such as community demographics, basic service governance and delivery, changes (if any) that occurred in the past three to four years, and expectations for the next six months. Topics have also covered inter-community relations and social cohesion as well as perceptions of humanitarian aid and other local actors. Priority areas of intervention were also a key topic. T5</p>
<p>Focus Group Discussions (FGD)</p>	<p>The focus group sessions followed the same topics as the KII interview guide. The aim was to assess the needs of the community and identify factors that affect Syrian and Lebanese inter-community relations. The focus group sessions were community-separated and conducted separately with Syrian and Lebanese community members.</p>

i. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

A total of 30 people from the 6 municipalities were interviewed individually – 10 Syrians and 20 Lebanese.

The key informants were selected based on their level of local knowledge of community dynamics in their municipalities. Profiles included mayors, school principals and teachers, international and local civil society actors, *mukhtars*, municipal staff and day laborers.

In the T5 area, key staff from two NGOs –one international (DRC) and one local (Utopia Foundation¹)- were interviewed and served as key informants for the entire T5 area - their organizations having operated in the T5 and the interviewed staff having extensive field expertise in the Syrian Crisis context within the area:

- ◆ 1 INGO – Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – Shelter Manager
- ◆ 1 local NGO – Utopia Foundation – Founder/President

The tool used for the purpose of this study was adapted from the REACH-OCHA joint Host Community Vulnerability Assessment Tool into a semi-structured key informant interview and an FGD Guide (adapted from KII Questionnaire) – see Annexes 3, 4 and 5 at the end of the report.

ii. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were conducted with community members from the six municipalities and involved a total of 71 people (44 Syrian, 27 Lebanese, 34 women, 37 male). Two FGD were conducted in each of the selected municipalities (12 in total): one comprised of Syrian refugees and other by Lebanese residents. The participants of the FGD were randomly selected by CARE field offices and/or municipalities.

Table 2: List of Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions conducted

Caza	Village	Community	KIIs			FGDs		
			Nb.	Gender Composition	Title/Position	Nb.	Gender Composition	
Chouf	Daraya	Lebanese	4	1 female 3 males	* Daraya Public School Teacher * Mayor * Employee at Ogero * University Professor	5	3 females 2 males	
		Syrian	2	Males	* Construction worker * Researcher in the Islamic University	4	2 females 2 males	
	Dalhoun	Lebanese	3	1 female 2 males	* Dalhoun Public School Principal * Mayor * Municipality police	3	1 female 2 males	
		Syrian	3	1 female 2 females	* Municipality employee and social activist * Carpenter * Volunteer at the municipality	7	3 females 4 males	
	Anout	Lebanese	5	1 female 4 males	* Officer in the Centre of Social Affairs * Mayor * Engineer/municipality member * Private School Principal (Lycee Pascale) * Shop owner	8	4 females 4 males	
		Syrian	1	1 female	* Employee at a clothes shop	7	2 females	
	T5	Ardeh	Lebanese	3	3 males 2 males	* Social activist/member of a women association * Mayor and 2 other municipality members * Ardeh Public School Principal	3	3 males
			Syrian	1	1 male	* Construction worker	15	9 females 6 males
		Myriata	Lebanese	3	3 males	* Mayor * Mukhtar * Appliance shop owner	10	5 females 5 males
			Syrian	2	2 males	* Social worker with several INGOS	9	5 females 4 males
Qalamoun		Lebanese	2	1 female 1 male	* School Supervisor * Mayor	-	-	
		Syrian	1	1 male	* Engineer	-	-	

Constraints and limitations of this study

Despite efforts to have the most varied and autonomous possible type of participants in this exercise, there was a heavy reliance on municipalities for referring FGD participants and key informants. In order to counteract the bias resulting from municipalities' selection of certain informants, the team interviewed informants who appeared to possess local knowledge while maintaining an objective view of the municipality and its work. Reliance on municipalities has also resulted in referrals that did not always answer CARE's requirements in terms of number and gender of participants. In some of the municipalities, as shown in the table above, the number of participants in group discussions and interviews was less than that in other municipalities. Furthermore, the study was interrupted in the municipality of Qalamoun due to security constraints.

Contextual Background Overview

Lebanon and Syria: An Intertwined History and Cultural Heritage

Geography, blood, moral ties and cultural relations have traditionally bonded the Lebanese and Syrians. Political history is another element shared by these two neighbouring countries as they both have been part of Greater Syria under the Ottoman Empire until the emergence of the two countries as nation states following the First World War, through the French colonization of both countries, and all throughout the Lebanese civil war and the Syrian intervention in the 1970s. Moreover, Lebanon and Syria have shared a common cultural heritage and solid family relations across borders.

Relations between the two countries, however, have especially been strained due to the Syrian military presence in Lebanon from 1976 until 2005, which left a lasting imprint on Lebanese-Syrian relations at all levels.

However, in the civilian scope, Lebanese-Syrian relations have not included serious conflict. Social tensions between Syrian migrant workers (predominantly in construction and agriculture) and the Lebanese were limited and reinforced by mutual traditions of hospitality and solidarity.

Over the years, many Syrian workers from rural villages have come to various Lebanese towns and cities seeking job opportunities. This phenomenon has resulted in stereotypes of Syrians, mainly seen as either military officers or as unskilled workers, coming from rural areas, with lower education levels and lower incomes: these are referred to as "Syrian workers" which, in Arabic has a negative connotation. They are often treated with mistrust and associated with the Syrian military and intelligence. These trends continue to this day and are sometimes the cause for conflict while, at the same time, this defined relationship provides the ground work for the social interactions between the two groups.

Since the start of the Syria Crisis more than three years ago, the number of Syrian refugees flowing into Lebanon has constantly increased. More than one million Syrian refugees now reside in Lebanon, in addition to the thousands of unregistered Syrians.

The prolonged presence of the Syrian refugees, compounded by resource constraints and overstretching, has generated substantial tensions between refugees and host communities.

This report examines the impact of the refugee influx on the target host communities in terms of service provision, while analysing the repercussions of the current situation on intra-community social cohesion.

Demographics

The figures below were provided by the mayors during the KIIs. As demonstrated in the table, Syrian refugees make up at between 15% and 45% of the residents in the selected villages. According to Utopia, which served as a key informant for the whole of T5, the Syrian population has reached 50% of the local residents.

The population numbers provided by the mayors were triangulated with those provided by FGD participants. The group discussions and KIIs with the Syrian participants revealed that these latter are less knowledgeable about the Lebanese population in the villages where they are residing. They also have little knowledge of the number

of Syrian families in their respective villages. This is so owing to the fact that they newly resided in these locations.

It is also important to stress the discrepancy with the last updated figures from UNHCR in June 2014 which

Table 3: Demographics (Number Of Individuals)

Area	Municipality	Lebanese	Syrians	Estimate % Syrian among the population
Chouf	Dalhoun	2650	800	30%
	Daraya	4200	1850	45%
	Anout	5000	1500	30%
T5	Myriata	15000	6000	40%
	Ardeh	6000	1000	15%
	Qalamoun	15000	5000	33%

show lower numbers of Syrian refugees than the ones indicated by the municipalities (Dalhoun - 463; Daraya - 1148; Anout - 461; Myriata - 2185; Ardeh - 614; Qalamoun - 3793) and may be due to the fact that the population may have increased, but also because the UNHCR figures don't include non-registered refugees.

All the municipalities that have participated in this study have reported a considerable increase in the number of Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis four years ago. Given the current security situation in Syria, with instability still dominating the country, the scenario of having the Syrian refugees returning to their home country does not seem very likely. While expressing their wish to return to Syria, most Syrian refugees in the FDGs stated that they would only consider it when the security situation allows for a safe return.

Furthermore, according to Lebanese participants in 2 FGD and 3 KIIs, there is a perception among this community that the large amount of humanitarian assistance that is provided to the Syrian population in Lebanon has also been contributing for the refugee community to extend their stay in this country.

Syrian Refugees make at least 15% of the residents in Lebanese villages. Their numbers sometimes reach 45% of all residents

Basic Service Provision and the impact of the Syrian refugee influx

The main provider for both Lebanese and Syrians in terms of basic services and infrastructure maintenance are the municipalities. However, due to the increase in the population caused by the Syrian refugee influx in the country over the last four years, all the municipalities that participated in this exercise highlighted the lack of the necessary resources to meet the needs of the population. In the case of some municipalities, even prior to the crisis there was already insufficient budget had already a negative impact on the quality of the service provision.

The Syrian refugees who have participated in this study have reported that most municipalities (5 out of 6) tend to attend to their inquiries and requests (e.g. maintenance and repairs) within their capacities. In one municipality, however, Syrians have reported some unresponsiveness from the municipality to their complaints and lack of communication channels with municipal authorities to obtain information about their rights as refugees.

Table 4: Condition of public services and level of consensus among all groups interviewed

Public Services	Chouf						T5					
	Dalhoun		Daraya		Anout		Ardeh		Myriata		Qalamoun'	
	Condition	Consensus										
Water supply	Poor	Yes	Fair	Yes								
Wastewater management	Poor	Yes	Poor	Yes	Poor	Yes	Poor	No	Poor	Yes	Poor	Yes
Electricity	Poor	Yes										
Solid waste management	Good	Yes	Good	Yes	Good	Yes	Fair	Yes	Poor	Yes	Poor	Yes
Education	Fair	No	Good	No	Good	Yes	Fair	Yes	Fair	No	Good	Yes
Healthcare	Fair	No	Fair	No	Poor	Yes	Poor	Yes	Poor	Yes	Fair	Yes
Transportation	Poor	Yes	Fair	No	Good	Yes	Good	Yes	Good	Yes	Good	Yes
Policing services	Poor	Yes	Fair	Yes	Poor	Yes	Good	Yes	Poor	Yes	Good	Yes

N.B.: The main areas where the Lebanese and Syrians had distinct points of view are related to : (i) Education: the Lebanese tend to have a positive opinion on the quality and access to education, whereas the Syrians have mainly reported their lack of access to education due to tuition fees and overcrowding of schools; ii) Healthcare: the Lebanese reported being more able to afford the costs of medical care and having better access to health facilities, whereas Syrians complained about the high cost of medical fees, the lack of proper equipment and personnel, as well as the lack of specialized services and treatment.

Electricity

Among the municipalities involved in this study, electricity is supplied between 4 to 12 hours per day, with frequent outages and some municipalities (two of them) reporting damaged power stations and electricity theft – illegal connections to the network.

Also in the selected municipalities in T5 region, the overload on power stations is stated to cause damage and thus increasing the power outages and electricity scarcity. One common observation from the Syrian FGDs is that fees for generator monthly subscriptions are too high (85 USD/130,000 LBP in Dalhoun/ Chouf; 80 USD/120,000 LBP in Myriata/ T5), while the average price for private generators is 80 USD (120,000 LBP) and most of the times beyond their means.

The changes perceived in terms of access to electricity is therefore linked to increased power outages, mainly associated by the Lebanese in general, to the increased population and the pressure on resources, with both Lebanese and Syrians relying more and more on private generators and complaining about lack of access to electricity.

Table 5: Electricity Provision

Electricity supply (per 24 hrs.)	Chouf			T5		
	Dalhoun	Daraya	Anout	Ardeh	Myriata	Qalamoun
Presently	4-6 hrs.	4-6 hrs.	4 hrs.	12 hrs.	6-12 hrs.	12 hrs.

Water Supply

All the participants in this study raised the issue of water scarcity and the high cost of water trucking from private suppliers, especially the Syrian participants who reported not being used to pay for this expense in their home country. Lebanese and Syrians reported to pay up to USD 100 per month to purchase trucked water.

The situation was reported by the participants to have worsened this year in particular due to the water scarcity situation that has stricken the country during the summer season due to reduced rain falls. The influx of refugees and the consequent increase in the population served by municipalities is also cited by some Lebanese FGDs as aggravating water scarcity and increase in price of water. Inflated demand and limited supply can be observed here with limited elasticity of supply driving prices up.

Additionally, several mayors that have participated in this study reported that the water supply has further declined due to the increase of the power outages, as water pumps are powered by electric motors.

Table 6: Water Provision

Water provision (hrs./week)	Chouf			T5		
	Dalhoun	Daraya	Anout	Ardeh	Myriata	Qalamoun ³
Presently	6-8	3-6	6-8	6	Trucked Water ⁴	N/A

Waste Water Disposal

Both Syrian and Lebanese participants revealed the existence of pressing issues when it comes to waste water management and sanitation systems. Existing infrastructure in selected municipalities is either old and requires urgent maintenance or is non-existent as is the case in the three Chouf municipalities as they have privately installed septic tanks. Only Daraya in Chouf has a sewage system; nonetheless, it only covers 20% of the households in the location.

Waste water disposal is a common issue for the selected municipalities in Chouf and T5: for instance, in Ardeh (T5), waste water appears to be connected to the water network, thus polluting the water intended for domestic use. In Myriata, the waste water flows into the river, similarly causing water pollution as reported by both Lebanese and Syrian residents. The locals shared their concern that underground water may get polluted due to the overflow of waste water, thus causing cleanliness, hygiene, and health issues in the villages. The Syrian community in Myriata (T5) reported some incidents of hepatitis caused by polluted water.

People who use septic tanks stated that these need to be emptied regularly and complained that limited support is provided by the municipalities in this aspect. The emptying of septic tanks poses the issue of cost and affordability which is, on most occasions, a burden for both host communities and refugees. The environmental effects of such activities have not been explored; it is unknown whether the waste from emptied tanks is treated or properly disposed of.

Solid Waste Management

The interviews and group discussions with the Lebanese participants in T5 and Chouf revealed an increase in solid waste as a result of the refugee influx and consequent population increase.

In the case of the 3 municipalities of Chouf involved in this study, the waste water disposal is undertaken by a private waste management company (Sukleen) paid by the municipalities which collects dumpsters on a daily basis. The municipalities have, therefore, been able to cope with the additional waste and capable of maintaining acceptable levels of cleanliness of the streets. The expenses of Sukleen, which is contracted by the state, are covered by the annual budget of municipalities allocated by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. This year, a decree was issued to reduce municipalities' annual share of revenues up to 80 per cent, which will have considerable consequences on municipalities' budget and ability to maintain acceptable level of public service provision.

On the other hand, waste disposal proved to be a major issue of concern for both Syrians and Lebanese residing in the T5 area. No private waste management company operates in the selected municipalities, which are the ones directly responsible for disposing of solid waste. These municipalities are facing difficulties in collecting garbage owing to the increase of the population, the lack of machinery (garbage trucks) and barrels/dumpsters to cope with the increased amount of waste, and the shortage of municipality staff⁵, which results in the accumulation of garbage on the streets.

Solid Waste Management is a heavy burden for municipalities in the T5 region, as opposed to Chouf municipalities where this service is provided by private operator Sukleen

Table 7 : Solid Waste Management

Solid Waste Management	Chouf			T5		
	Dalhoun	Daraya	Anout	Ardeh	Myriata	Qalamoun
Presently	Collected on a daily basis					

Education

Syrian students were reported by participants in this study to be mostly registered in public rather than private schools owing to two main reasons: the costs and the curricula. The relatively higher cost of education in private schools forces the Syrians to enroll their children in public schools.

Additionally, while the curricula of the schools in Syria are exclusively in Arabic, the Lebanese curriculum is bilingual in public and private schools or even trilingual at times in private schools, which presents a great barrier for Syrian students to integrate into the Lebanese educational system. Admission into private schools is consequently more difficult for Syrian students as this have been stressed by all Syrian respondents.

As the Syrian curriculum greatly differs from the Lebanese curriculum, with language being the major barrier, Syrians do not attempt to register their children in private institutions, with very few exceptions of the more well-off families.

In both public and private schools, priority is always given to Lebanese children as per the teachers, schools principals and mayors interviewed. In Ardeh and Dalhoun, FGDs with Syrian refugees revealed that many are unable to register their children in local schools due to the saturation of students in classes. Therefore, in addition to the morning teaching shift which is mixed for both Lebanese and Syrians students, some schools have established a specific afternoon shift for the Syrians which is still not enough to cover all the needs. Moreover, instances of insults and discrimination by Lebanese students against their Syrian peers are recorded and may be seen as a form of bullying.

Health Services

Both Lebanese and Syrian participants in this study highlighted the insufficient medical and health services available: in some of the selected villages there are private dispensaries but none of the selected municipalities had a hospital. In case of emergency, the Lebanese report going to (mostly private) hospitals available in neighbouring locations/ villages; these are not always accessible for Syrians who can't afford the cost. On the other hand, the Syrian population reports more reliance on dispensaries and mobile clinics provided by NGOs or the Lebanese Red Cross.

Furthermore, some Syrian FGD participants in Anout, stated that in case of illness and sickness, consultation is made with the local pharmacist rather than a doctor.

Syrian refugees face considerable problems when it comes to access health services and medical aid

Aside from that, those who can afford it visit private clinics, which are more abundant in the villages. Although in some places health services are provided for free, such as in the Daraya mobile clinic and the Red Cross services in Dalhoun, several Syrians have yet reported that they often have to pay the full cost in some other facilities, including UNHCR-contracted hospitals. During the discussions, some Syrians stated that several hospitals refused to admit them because they could not afford to pay the bill. It is unclear, however, whether their cases were those of emergencies, in which case the UNHCR-contracted facility should cover up to 75% of the costs as part of the UNHCR health package.

The Lebanese government does not have a comprehensive health policy for its nationals, and so health services in clinics are considered expensive, especially for vulnerable communities –Lebanese and Syrians alike. In addition, dispensaries are sometimes not well-equipped for chronic diseases due to the unavailability or scarcity of resources and equipment. Utopia has also stressed the lack of medical facilities and services in many regions of the country and the complaints raised by both Lebanese and Syrians in this regard.



Photo: CARE/Johanna Mitscherlich

Most urgent needs and priorities in accessing basic services

The table below illustrates the urgent needs of the Lebanese and Syrian communities regarding access to public services, according to the participants in this study. While there are some differences in the needs and priorities among Lebanese and Syrian communities, some areas are a priority for both communities such as water and electricity. Priorities and needs differed between the Lebanese and the Syrians. However they were cross-cutting across the two selected regions.

Community needs	Chouf						T5					
	Dalhoun		Daraya		Anout		Ardeh		Myriata		Qalamoun-	
	LEB	SY	LEB	SY	LEB	SY	LEB	SY	LEB	SY	LEB	SY
Water supply	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wastewater management	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Solid waste management						Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes				Yes
Healthcare			Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes
Rehabilitation of roads			Yes								Yes	
Cash assistance		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		
Assistance with registration				Yes		Yes				Yes		

Electricity was mentioned by both Syrian and Lebanese communities as a critical need, mainly due to the increase in the power outages and the high bills associated with generator monthly fees. In particular, the municipalities have emphasized the urgency to acquire power generators in order to be able to meet the needs of their increased population.

Among public services: water, sanitation and electricity proved to be a priority among both the refugees and the host communities

Water supply was highlighted by both Syrian and Lebanese participants in this study as a crucial and urgent need, mainly due to the water scarcity situation that was on-going in the country at the time that this study was conducted, and the high costs of water trucking. In particular, Lebanese participants have demonstrated some concern over the possibility that water shortages may lead to the spread or outbreak of water related diseases in the Syrian refugee community, in particular in places with high concentration of people such as in collective shelters and informal settlements. All the municipalities consulted required support with the instalment of new water wells and the maintenance of existing water networks.

Sanitation was an area identified by all the municipalities involved in this study as a pressing issue, mainly due to the concerns around underground water pollution, outbreak of diseases due to obsolete infrastructure (such as the case of two of the municipalities), or overflow of septic tanks (raised by one municipality). While acknowledging the importance of the proper provision of these services, the Syrians, however, have more immediate needs.

Urgent support in **solid waste management** emerges as a critical issue in the selected T5 municipalities, particularly in Myriata. With limited municipality staff for a village of 21,000 residents, the municipality faces a serious issue especially as this poses a threat to cleanliness and hygiene. Both host and refugee communities expressed their concern with this. The municipality requested support in acquiring additional waste containers to be distributed on the roads and byways of Myriata so as to cover all the area and streets. In addition to barrels and containers, the municipality also requested assistance in acquiring a waste truck to enhance and maximize waste collection and disposal.

Health services were highlighted in a particular way by the Syrian participants who have expressed critical needs in this sector mainly due to the high cost of medical consultations, treatments and medications,

especially considering that the Syrians have stated not having to pay for health services in their home country. On the other hand, and although some of the villages covered by the municipalities that were targeted with this study lack public health facilities, the Lebanese participants expressed overall satisfaction with the services provided by neighbouring private hospitals and clinics.

The same applies to **education**. In Dalhoun, for instance, several FGD participants reported being unable to register their children in school due to the fees required by the local (public) schools. In Myriata, one Syrian KI reported the same case and raised the issue of school affordability. In Ardeh, the Syrian community has stated in the FGD that the overcrowding in schools has kept them from enrolling their children in the local school.

Many parents do not have the sufficient resources to register their children or do not benefit from UNHCR assistance. Despite the fact that registered refugees receive education assistance which they report to come from the UNHCR (probably UNICEF), the refugees still have to pay in order to be refunded at a later stage. This is a problem for Syrian families, especially as many do not have the registration amount to begin with.

Other needs that were consistently prioritized by the Syrian participants in this study included cash assistance to cover their basic expenses including food, rent, health, and education. The Syrian community also stressed their need for livelihood opportunities as most of them are temporary workers hired on a day-to-day basis in unstable jobs. The cost of regularization of their legal situation in Lebanon, that is their paperwork and visas, appeared to be a heavy burden impacting their livelihoods and was highlighted by all Syrian participants.



Photo: CARE/Racha El Daoi

Social Cohesion

Interactions between communities and Sources of Tension

Interviews and group discussions revealed limited social interactions between Lebanese and Syrians on a needs-only basis: current relations are mostly between landlords and tenants as well as neighbourhood relationships, however limited the latter may be.

Moreover, the interviews of both Lebanese and Syrians highlighted significant causes of tensions that have existed prior to the crisis, which are mainly related to political, social and cultural factors and have aggravated since the refugee influx in Lebanon.

In the last three years, with Syrian families arriving to Lebanon, the relations between Syrian and Lebanese communities expanded and changed as increased inter-community interactions, previously characterised by tolerance and positive perception of the Lebanese towards the Syrians at the start of the crisis, has been decreasing. Lebanese acknowledged that their living conditions have been deteriorating by the refugees' influx through the pressure over local resources which municipalities struggle to cope with.

The Syrians themselves appear to be aware of the increasing demands on local authorities and the discontent of the Lebanese with their continued presence as consequent impacts on local resources and capacities.

The interviews and discussions highlighted some of the reasons behind current and potential tensions among Syrian and Lebanese communities:

- ◆ Water shortages, power outages and overstretched resources of the overall public service provision, especially since there are strong perceptions by Lebanese respondents that the population increase caused by the influx of Syrian refugees has deteriorated an already weak infrastructure.
- ◆ Lack of economic opportunities for both communities and increase in unemployment rates among the Lebanese and the limited intervention of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). Lebanese KIs and FGD participants stated that the refugee workforce of unskilled labour is now competing with the local community as it is much cheaper, which exacerbates competition.
- ◆ Syrian respondents from both Chouf and T5 reported being affected by exploitation from members of the host communities who, in some sectors, are gaining benefits from the influx of Syrian refugees in the country mainly through:
 - ◇ House and land owners are increasing the rental amounts, as well as renting unfinished or low quality living spaces (such as shops, parking areas, garages, warehouses, etc.).
 - ◇ Local businesses benefiting from the vast availability of cheap labour.
- ◆ Personal conflicts between Syrians and Lebanese, resulting from conflicts between landlords and tenants over rent fees and utilities' bills, were frequently reported by both groups.
- ◆ Personal conflicts between Syrian employees with their Lebanese employers. There are a few cases among the interviewed Syrian PoCs who personally experienced a conflict with their employer for refusing to pay them their wages.
- ◆ Personal conflicts and altercations between members of both communities, especially the youth among the Lebanese, resulting from ostracism or discriminative behaviour towards refugees.
- ◆ Personal conflicts resulting from cultural differences between the two groups, namely street harassment by Syrian community members of Lebanese women reported in Daraya, Chouf.
- ◆ Lebanese complaining that Humanitarian assistance mostly targets the refugee communities.

Interactions between the Lebanese and the Syrian refugees are limited in the social sphere

The Battle of Aarsal⁷ which started on August 2nd, one week prior to the start of the survey in T5. This has opened way to capture more observations on feelings of security among both host communities and persons of

concern. Arsal tensions intensified the feelings of resentment and triggered a sense of insecurity by the Lebanese towards the Syrians and vice versa.

Community-Established regulations for Syrians⁸

Host communities in Ardeh and Qalamoun (T5) have not established any rules or regulations for the Syrian refugees since the start of the Syria crisis. This is also the case for Dalhoun in Chouf where the municipality has taken the lead on attending to the immediate needs and demands of all residents, within the means and resources it possesses.

On another hand, the municipalities of Anout, Daraya, and Myriata have set curfews restricting the movements of Syrians at night. Daraya has also set another curfew on motorcycles⁹ for the Syrians. However, it is important to note that enforcing such curfews remains inconsistent and fluctuates with the security situation. Some residents, mainly Lebanese youths, sometimes take it into their hands to enforce such curfews which is another occasional source of tensions.

The Lebanese fear that the situation is likely to escalate if humanitarian assistance targeting the Syrians is reduced

Security

The interview guide used by CARE analysed the security situation prior to the refugee influx from Syria and compares it to the situation in the last four years.

All the Lebanese interviewed confirmed that their villages are safe but that they feel less secure than before the beginning of the crisis.

The security situation in Lebanon and Syria caused an increase in security incidents that spread across the country and consequently increased tensions between host and refugee communities. As mentioned above, this was aggravated by the Arsal battle between the Lebanese Armed Forces and armed groups, which led to mobilisation across the country and created a larger strain on inter-community relations¹⁰.

Again, the Arsal clashes constitute a turning point with direct implications on the relations that govern the Lebanese and Syrian communities. This armed conflict has indeed created a state of alert and anticipation among the two groups.

In this context, it is important to note that tensions do not arise from actual incidents only, but are also manifestations of negative perceptions that individuals from both groups have of each other.

As aggregated data reveals, the adoption of negative coping mechanisms by the Syrian communities also have consequences in terms of security as, indeed, there has been reported cases of theft, robberies, and crime which aggravates the general sense of insecurity among the Lebanese. Moreover, in 1 FGD and 4 KIIs (one of these KII was conducted with a Syrian individual), including with NGO staff, respondents directly linked the (potential) decrease of humanitarian assistance with an increase in robberies, hostilities, and security incidents.

Negative perceptions among these two groups seem to be reinforced by word of mouth of other incidents having occurred in several areas of the country, as well as media news and reports, rather than specific incidents reported by one or the other group. In addition, local media has been constantly highlighting those and inflate their presence in daily news broadcasts by specifying the nationality of perpetrators which fuels negative perceptions.

Despite the security events in Lebanon, both Lebanese and Syrians maintain that the situation has been tolerable and contained despite the increasing insecurity felt by both.

Furthermore, according to the Shelter Manager at DRC, the Syrian refugees living in informal settlements are a bigger source of concern to the Lebanese than those who live in regular housing. This is particularly so due to the large concentration of the refugee population in addition to the lack of clear national regulations pertaining to the management and supervision of camps and informal settlements.

Finally, regarding policing services, the Lebanese maintain that the policing services are limited due to the lack of capacities and personnel in the local police stations: some municipalities with thousands of residents can only afford to employ a single staff member for policing who, at the same time, is usually tasked with other service provisions such as waste collection and disposal, and water and electricity bill collections.

Internal Security Forces may sometimes conduct patrols although not extensively, as the residents remark.

Perceptions

a) Lebanese and Syrians:

The frictions between the two groups lies mainly in the prejudices that both groups have towards each other, although the Lebanese have expressed more negative perceptions in this regard than the Syrians during this study.

Incidents seem to be limited in numbers but an increase has been reported with the Syrian influx, with youth being mentioned as the most involved group in altercations, fights, thefts, etc.

- ◆ Lebanese participants in this study have assumed that there is certain negativity in the way that the Syrians are perceived, which has led to discriminatory behaviour, including insults and assaults.
- ◆ Lebanese participants tend to attribute the causes of incidents to the Syrians -this seems to be the case specifically in Myriata and Daraya municipalities, where some criminal incidents were prematurely attributed to Syrians without tangible evidence.
- ◆ Lebanese participants have also expressed fear for the outbreak of diseases caused by polluted drinking water, poor sanitation conditions, and hygiene practices of the Syrians.
- ◆ In Daraya, the Lebanese participants in the FGD expressed their concern that the Syrians, as viewed negatively in light of the afore-mentioned perceptions, may influence the Lebanese culture negatively and affect younger generations in Lebanon, especially that children and youth from both communities are have more interactions.
- ◆ Lebanese participants have also highlighted their perception that the Syrian refugees receive preferential access to Lebanese healthcare and education support services (namely the ones provided by INGOs, Red Cross, UN agencies, etc.).
- ◆ Lebanese nationals have also expressed their fear that the lack of economic opportunities and the reduction on the aid for the Syrians would cause more security incidents and an increase in crime.

When it comes to how Syrians perceive the Lebanese they often consider themselves as marginalized and aggrieved in Lebanon, and revealed their perception that the Lebanese look upon them with superiority.

b) Government and policing services:

The national government is generally viewed negatively by the Lebanese community in Chouf and in T5.

The Iklim and T5 areas have suffered from underdevelopment and marginalization in infrastructure development and service provision. The locals consider that the state is weak and that development projects are decided based on favouritism.

Based on what we mentioned concerning the lack of capacities and limited resources of municipalities and internal security forces, both actors are perceived as weak and unresponsive entities.

c) National Armed Forces:

The most striking finding of this study was the highly positive view in which the LAF (Lebanese Armed Forces) are viewed.

The Lebanese consider this institution as their pride and are fully respectful of it and its members.

The Syrians share the same view of the LAF. They highly appreciate the respect and dignity with which they have treated them as PoCs since the start of the crisis. They note that as they travel through border and local checkpoints, they are always well-treated by the army, especially as memories of their own military presence come to mind. Comparison between Syrian and Lebanese armed forces attitudes and approach has framed their positive perception of the army.

Nevertheless, some Syrian individuals expressed their concern with the raids conducted by the army on the

homes of illegal residents. Some individuals who had relatives personally experience the raids also voiced their concern with the brutality of some of the soldiers. These raids have started following the Aarsal events with the armed forces raiding refugee camps and informal settlements as well as houses of illegal Syrian residents and suspects in Aarsal and several other areas in the North.

d) UN and INGOs:

The Syrians participants in this study look favourably upon UN agencies and INGOs, especially given the continuous need of this community for support.

The municipalities have also expressed to be very receptive of international organizations as they are also in dire need for support, especially Myriata which is heavily burdened by the refugee influx.

As for the Lebanese community in general, the participants in this study have expressed some reservations about INGOs operating in their respective areas due to the fact the most of the humanitarian assistance targets the Syrian population. For the Lebanese participants, many Lebanese families are vulnerable and in need of assistance. This, however, does not imply a negative perception regarding INGOs.

e) Humanitarian assistance

- ◆ There is a widespread perception among Lebanese communities that Syrians are benefiting disproportionately from the national and international response.
- ◆ The Lebanese participants in this study expressed the necessity to target Lebanese community members in the assistance provided under the Syria Response, especially since several municipalities include economically vulnerable Lebanese households who have been overlooked by local and international actors.
- ◆ Lebanese communities indicated some frustration as social services were being provided solely to the Syrian communities.
- ◆ Nearly all of the respondents found it unfair that low-income Lebanese residents are not able to benefit from the same assistance as the Syrian refugees living in the same community, especially regarding cash programs.
- ◆ The DRC Shelter Manager anticipates tensions and potential source of conflict, especially in informal tented settlements and collective housing due to the reduced funding received by aid organizations.



Photo: CARE

Recommendations for further programming

Access to basic services

The development and strengthening of **basic infrastructure and services**, source of complaints for both Syrian and Lebanese communities, could contribute to mitigate potential conflicts between these two population groups – especially regarding water supply, electricity, wastewater and solid waste disposal, and health services.

The **alleviation of pressure on immediate sources of tensions** is also recommended, in particular the access of livelihoods due to the increased competition between the Syrians and Lebanese over the available labour market and the limited job opportunities.

The increase of the municipalities' capacity to manage and respond to complaints raised by local residents, as well as to pursue an equal provision of services for both Syrian and Lebanese residents, could also be a positive approach.

Protection and conflict prevention

This study found that the tensions between the Syrian and Lebanese communities do not arise only from actual incidents, but are also a manifestation of negative perceptions that individuals from both groups have of each other. So far, the humanitarian community has not directly addressed these negative perceptions which can lead to more serious levels of confrontation in the future. It is recommended, thus, to integrate in future programming activities that can contribute to defuse tensions between these two communities by addressing these misperceptions, which could include:

- ⇒ Increase opportunities for social interaction between and among Syrian and Lebanese communities:
 - i. Capacity building in conflict resolution among local actors (NGOs, CSOs, municipalities).
 - ii. Conflict resolution workshops for host and refugee communities; examine the feasibility of gathering both communities in social/community-building activities.
- ⇒ Protection of vulnerable communities against harassment and violence through advocacy with municipalities.
- ⇒ Reinforcement of the capacity of local institutions and law enforcement agencies (local police, internal security forces) to identify and respond to tensions and incidents.
- ⇒ Mainstreaming social cohesion throughout the current response through awareness raising and capacity building, and again through advocacy campaigns with local media.
- ⇒ Identification and recognition of vulnerabilities among groups other than Syrian refugees to counterbalance the perception that Syrian refugees receive a disproportionate amount of support.
- ⇒ Increase mainstreaming of accountability and communication towards both refugees and host communities at municipal level.

Designing projects that are conceived to tackle the negative perceptions, stigma, and stereotyping associated with the refugee response.



Photo: CARE

Annex 1 – Appreciation of General Indicators for Community Support Projects (CSPs)

Indicator	Host Community	Appreciation	Syrian Refugees	Appreciation (SY)
Access to employment	Lebanese community feels threatened by competition with Syrian labor force.	Fair	Syrian refugees have mostly temporary jobs and get paid by the day. The majority complains about the lack of employment opportunities.	Poor
Access to education		Good	Many refugees complained about their inability to register their children in schools due to (i) High school fees; (ii) Difference in educational curriculum.	Poor
Access to health		Fair	Among the priorities identified by the refugee community as urgent was the access to health services in terms of affordability and availability.	Poor
Access to improved sanitation services	Host communities have old sanitation structures that either require maintenance or need to be replaced. In Chouf, new sewage systems need to be installed.	Poor	Sanitation was reported as being less priority for refugees.	Fair
Access to water	Host community has no proper provision of water, there is a heavy reliance on trucked water.	Poor	Syrian refugees face problems with water supply, especially for having to pay for trucked water.	Poor
Access to electricity	Power outages, reliance on private generators.	Poor	The refugees complain about having to pay for private generators.	Poor
Inter-group tensions/conflicts	Limited to young members of the Lebanese community.	Fair	Feeling of having crimes, robberies, diseases and illnesses attributed to them.	Fair
People who feel social structure is open and egalitarian		Good	Syrian refugees feel discriminated against Lebanese. Most of them report not having access to local authorities and governing bodies such as security forces and municipalities for complaints.	Poor
Population who feel discriminated against owing to their nationality or social status		N/A	Syrians are mostly treated with superiority.	Poor
Trust of PoCs in community's key informants and their ability to mitigate arising conflicts		N/A	Only in Dalhoun, Chouf where refugees are satisfied with how municipality supervises their stay in the village.	Poor

Indicator	Host Community	Appreciation	Syrian Refugees	Appreciation (SY)
Attitudes of PoCs and host community members towards arising conflicts	Host communities have stated that security situation has been tolerable but is more prone to deteriorate. Anticipation of bigger security events. Fear of armament (of Syrian refugees, especially after the Battle of Aarsal).	Poor	Refugee community seems to avoid conflict.	Fair
People who engage in inter-group social exchanges	Very limited exchanges.	Poor	Limited to neighborhood, landlord/tenant and employment relations.	Poor
People with positive attitude towards other group	The overall attitude towards Syrians is that of sympathy especially at the start of the crisis and the influx of Syrians to Lebanon. The Lebanese do admit the cultural and social differences with the refugees. They also highlight the difference in the educational level and reproductive health awareness. With the intensified security situation, the Lebanese are more prudent and are on alert when it	Poor	The Syrians seemed less articulate in their opinions on the Lebanese. They consider that they are discriminated and that the Lebanese population is taking advantage of their presence to increase prices and rent. They compare their influx to Lebanon with the Lebanese influx to Syria in 2006. For them, the Syrians were more welcoming to the Lebanese than are the Lebanese to them.	Poor
Attitude of local service providers towards Syrian refugees	Most municipalities are working to their full capacity and are limited by their resources. With the exception of Daraya in Chouf, municipalities expressed their openness to respond to the needs of all residents.	Fair	The majority of the refugees feel that there is discrimination by local authorities and a tendency to be biased against them.	Poor
People who participate in social activities (Syrians)		N/A	Social activities of Syrians are limited. In Chouf, however, especially in Dalhoun, Syrians participate in local weddings and funerals. This is less so in the 2 other selected municipalities in Chouf. In T5, there is a null participation of Syrians in local social activities.	Fair

Annex 2: Appreciation for other Social Cohesion Indicators

Indicator	Chouf			T5		
	Dalhoun	Daraya	Anout	Ardeh	Myriata	Qalamoun ¹¹
Host community members voice their support for the continued presence of refugees	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Regular exchanges between the host and refugee communities take place	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low
Host community members indicate that they benefit from the same levels of support as refugees	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Reports of violence, violent disputes and instances of harassment between members of the host and refugee community	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High ¹²

Annex 3 – Social cohesion interview guide – Focus group discussion

Section A - Background	
Province	
District	
Town	
Municipality	
Municipality Federation	
Name	
Position	
Gender	
Phone Number	
Section B: Demographics	
Refugees	Lebanese
<i>Number of Families/individuals</i>	<i>Number of Individuals/Families</i>
Currently	
Three Years Ago (Before the arrival of Refugees)	
The change that occurred in the past 6 months	
The change that will occur in the next 6 months	
Section C - Basic Service Providers	
The support in the sector of basic services	
Who provides the support regarding infrastructure and basic services	
Level of satisfaction in the host community	
Methods used to solve basic needs problems	
Unions / Gatherings / Committees	
Organizing Group	
Efficiency	
Parties where people go to discuss and solve problems	
Efficiency of these parties	

Section D - Basic Services & Infrastructure
Details about facilities in the town (distance- Name)
Academic
Level in past 6 months
Healthcare
Level in past 6 months
Electricity
Level in past 6 months
Roads
Level in past 6 months
Transportation
Availability
Prices
Level in past 6 months
Sources of water (drinking & other purposes)
Specify
Availability
Is it enough
Level in past 6 months
Solid Waste
Ways of disposal
Level in the past 6 months
Sewage Systems
Type of system and ways to handle sewage disposals
Level in the past 6 months
Rate the priority level of each of the following sectors
Education
Healthcare
Electricity
Roads
Transportation
Water lines & pipes
Solid waste disposal
Sewage systems
Police

Section E: Social Cohesion
Relations between syrians and lebanese
were there relations between syrians and lebanese three years ago (before the arrival of refugees)
Type of relations (before the arrival of refugees)
Regularity of meetings
If any changes have occurred in the past 6 months Security related
Give examples
prediction or vision for the next 6 months
Common grounds and Conflicts
Places where the two communities meet
Places that conflict occurs
Rules and regulations for Syrians (curfews etc...)
Kind of rule/guideline
Causes of division between the two societies
Causes
Ask for a personal example
Give examples
Security
Was the sense of security before the arrival of refugees less or more than it is currently
Places where Lebanese feel insecure
Reasons
Current situation
Places where Syrians feel insecure
Reasons
Incidents
Specify certain incidents
Type of incident
Contributors to the conflict
If there is an increase in incidents in the past 6 months
Presence of police and municipality security : availability in the past 6 months
Prediction or vision for the next 6 months
Participation of the host community in these incidents: Demonstrations - violence - blocking roads
Against what/whom?
Reasons for tension
Where are the tensions resolved : place & participants
Acceptance and participation in these meetings to solve problems
Efficiency

Perceptions and Impressions on other communities and parties - in the form of notes
Lebanese community
Syrian Community
Syrian Refugees
Palestinians
Government
Municipality
Lebanese Army
Police
Local political parties
Religious parties
UN
NGOs
Section F: Humanitarian Assistance
Humanitarian agencies working within the area
Who are they
Which community are they helping
Sectors and programs
Balance in these agencies assistance
Which community receives more assistance

Notes

¹ UTOPIA is a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to abolishing all types of social discrepancies through specialized projects and programs that rely on voluntary work, in hopes of acquiring social justice among people within the same society regardless of their political or religious beliefs. Utopia aims to inspire a culture of civic awareness and equal citizenship in the Lebanese society and in Tripoli in particular.

² As per the data available from two Lebanese KIs and one Syrian KI.

³ More than 1/3 of the village households are not connected to the water network according to the KIIs conducted

⁴ The water network is reported to be obsolete and in need for maintenance. Less than 20% of the village is connected to the network. The rest rely on trucked water. Households that are connected reported that water is supplied once a week but did not specified hours of supply.

⁵ The municipality of Myriata, for example, has a population of 15,000 and only 3 municipal staff.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Clashes between the Lebanese Armed Forces and members of Al-Nusra Front and ISIS after Lebanese security forces arrested an Al-Nusra Front commander and where the rebels proceeded to take control of the town of Arsal and took 16 policemen as hostages.

⁸ These are restrictions targeted against Syrians such as: curfews, employment/residency restrictions; identification papers, restrictions on hosting refugees.

⁹ Curfew on motorcycles targeted only Syrian refugees.

¹⁰ We were able to capture the repercussions of the Arsal battle in Tripoli only: by the time the clashes started the study was already completed in Chouf.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² No incidents were reported. However, Qalamoun has been witnessing demonstrations and road blockages for the past few months related to the Battle of Arsal and the abduction of soldiers and internal security personnel by Al-Nusra Front. We have to consider the effect this has on inter-community relations.

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www.care-international.org

CARE International In Lebanon

Furn El Shebak - Sami El Solh
Serhal Building - 4th floor
Beirut - Lebanon
T) 00961-1-381775

CARE International

Founded in 1945, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty and providing lifesaving assistance in emergencies. CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to help lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty. Last year, CARE worked in 87 countries around the world to assist more than 97 million people improve basic health and education, fight hunger, increase access to clean water and sanitation, expand economic opportunity, confront climate change, and recover from disasters.

CARE International in Lebanon meets refugees' most basic and pressing needs, mainly providing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene assistance (WASH), Non-Food Items (NFIs) and Cash assistance in Beirut/Mount and North Lebanon governorates. This has included improving of drainage systems, distributing sanitary items, providing hygiene promotion sessions as well as winterization, newcomer and cash assistance. CARE has also been working with municipalities to improve water supply and sanitation infrastructure for refugees as well as for host communities.