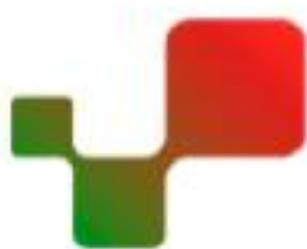


Syrian Refugees Report

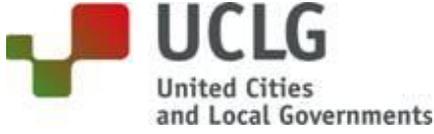
Turkey-Jordan-Lebanon



UCLG

The Global Network of Cities,
Local and Regional Governments

UCLG Middle-East working group



This report was prepared by UCLG-MEWA in collaboration with Cités Unies France (CUF), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT) and VNG International.

The authors' views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the member organizations.

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Introduction

UCLG Peace Mission for Syrian refugees¹:

Within the context of the Syrian crisis the UCLG Middle East Working Group organized a Peace mission for Syrian Refugees. From 18-26 March, 2013, at the initiative of UCLG President TOPBAŞ, an international delegation of Turkish, Dutch and French elected officials from local governments and experts from the national associations of local governments in Canada (FCM - Federation of Canadian Municipalities), the Netherlands (VNG - Netherlands Association of Municipalities), Turkey (UMT - Union of Municipalities of Turkey), United Cities France (CUF - Cités Unies France), Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Metropolitan Municipality and United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA), visited bordering municipalities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

The delegation's aim was to deliver a message of solidarity and make a list of needs and report it to UCLG members. After approval received during UCLG Executive Bureau hold in Lyon in June 2013, the members of the UCLG Middle East Working Group has been undertaken their activities in the three visited countries.

Eight months after its mission, the UCLG Middle East Committee has issued this document which aims to provide updates on the situation in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. This overview points out the fact that collaboration between NGOs, international agencies and local governments is still marginal. This lack of collaboration represents a big loss of efficiency for aid delivery and it undermines the regional stability by discrediting local authorities.

In order to comply with their responsibilities, local authorities are calling for urgent support. The important work deployed by NGOs and UN agencies in the region cannot and should not replace local government tasks and responsibilities, specific support to local governments is becoming critical if social stability is to be guaranteed.

In this framework the UCLG Middle East Working Group concludes its report with recommendations to UN Agencies and NGOs and presents its project to improve the aid Syrian refugees will be able to receive.

¹ *Mission report and recommendations, May 2013 - Municipalities on the Frontline: The effects of the Syrian Crisis on local government in bordering countries (Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon)*

I. Turkey

Since the beginning of the crisis in Syria in 2011, the Turkish government was the first country which managed the influx of thousands of Syrians citizens through the borders. Next to the Syrian-Turkish borders, many refugee camps have been installed in some cities, organized by their respective local governments providing help from internal resources. In fact, many centers opened to offer services to the Syrian population such as shelters, food, non-food items, education and medical assistance. After a longer period and the continuation of the influx of Syrian citizens in Turkey, the Turkish Government accepted help from other actors such as the Turkish Red Crescent Society and other international organizations. The camps couldn't fit all the coming people then many of them had to live outside the camps and this situation began to be difficult to manage for the Turkish local governments at the Syrian-Turkish border.

1. Summary Findings of the UCLG Delegation for Syrian Refugees:

During this visit, the international delegation conclude that Turkey managed in a good way the flow of Syrian citizens as the country is well prepared and experienced for disasters, and the common values and culture of both countries are also a reason for the Turkish population to help their neighbors.

However, two years after the beginning of the conflict, Turkish local governments at the borders felt the strain although the Turkish government supports them and they feel that the help of other countries is not enough.

After the mission, Turkey appeals the international local government community to¹:

- Urgently make every effort to bring the situation to the attention of the world leaders (the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the European Union, national and local governments, the non government community and also the private sector) and advocate for an end to the conflict;
- Assist local authorities with specific material support (ambulances, fire trucks, transport, i.e. vans and garbage trucks)
- Maintain contact with Syrian municipalities who will need help with reconstruction and, in the longer term, with developing a democratic local government system.

2. Current Situation in Turkey:

According to UNHCR, on 24 October 2013, there are 21 Syrian refugee camps in 10 provinces of Turkey (Table 1).

On 30 October 2013, UNHCR stated that Syrian refugees, registered or not registered, are mostly located in Gaziantep, Hatay and Şanlıurfa. 200005 refugees are in the camps and 306527 are registered outside the camps (Table 2). 75% of the refugees are women and children and 25% are men.

Table 1

Syrian Refugee Camps in Turkey - UNHCR 24.10.2013				
Cities		Tents	Containers	Persons
Adana	Saricam	2142		10248
Adiyaman	Merkez	2292		10185
Gaziantep	Islahiye	1754		9629
Hatay	Yayladagi1	250		3258
	Yayladagi2	510		3483
	Altinozu1		259 TEKEL Warehouse	1518
	Altinozu2	620		2779
	Apaydin container city		1165	4920
Kahramanmaraş	Merkez	2737		14970
Kilis	Oncupinar		2053	13981
	Elbeyli-Besiriye		3592	16254
Malatya	Beydagi		2083	7070
Mardin	Midyat	1300		3017
Osmaniye	Cevdetiye	2012		8569
	Duzici container city		760	
Şanlıurfa	Harran Kokenli		2000	13829
	Ceylanpinar	4771		25232
	Akcakale	4970		27069
	Karkamis	1636		7361
	Nizip1	1858		11485
	Nizip2		1000	5082
Total				199939

Table 2

Number of Syrian Refugee UNHCR Turkey, Ankara - 30.10.2013			
Cities	Registered Syrian Refugees in Camps	Registered Syrian Refugees outside of the Camps	Total
Adana	10177	4000	14177
Adiyaman	10218	202	10420
Gaziantep	33654	101158	134812
Hatay	15753	61066	76819
Kahramanmaraş	14965	10730	25695
Kilis	30007	25920	55927
Malatya	7072	0	7072
Mardin	3013	37401	40414
Osmaniye	8739	8948	17687
Şanlıurfa	66349	49102	115451
Other	58	8000	8058
Total	200005	306527	506532

A. Health

Due to the importance of the language issue, the Turkish Government allowed Syrian doctors and pharmacists to work as volunteers in the camps once they get their diplomas certified by the Chamber of Doctors.

Moreover, as the poliomyelitis (polio) is suspected in Syria, Turkish Health Authorities decided to begin operations of surveillance and vaccination for the Syrian citizen, and more especially for Syrian children, in Gaziantep, near the Syrian-Turkish border. An international organization called WHO (World Health Organization) works with the Turkish Authorities in this field and settled recently in Gaziantep to serve as a center of operations.

B. Food

WFP² (World Food Programme) organization, in partnership with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), provides food to close to 3 million Syrian refugees every month inside Syria. In many parts of the country, the access in some neighborhood is limited or forbidden by the Syrian Government, especially in Damascus suburbs these last months, that causes cases of hunger until death for many children.

WFP acts also in all the Turkish cities (Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Hatay etc.) near the Syrian-Turkish border to provide the basic services to the refugees.

C. Education

According to UNHCR, in September 2013, the Turkish Ministry of Education informed that qualified Syrian teachers could work in the camps as volunteers and they will be supervised by the Education Director.

Besides, UNICEF³ will open in total ten schools that will be built in both camp and non-camp Syrian communities as a response to a request by the Turkish government. One of them opened on 5 November 2013, in Islahiye Refugee camp in Southeastern Turkey which will provide about 2,200 Syrian children with a safe and secure environment in which to learn and grow.

D. Local Governments

UNHCR's MENA Director and Regional Refugee Coordinator⁴ met with officials from MFA, AFAD, the new Directorate for Immigration, UN agencies and some NGOs. The discussion was about the challenges that the refugees are facing, in addition to financial difficulties that confront the government as well as municipalities and governorates at the local level in terms of services and infrastructure, among other topics.

E. Legislation

According to UNHCR, in April 2013, a Law on Foreigners and International Protection has been adopted by the Turkish Government, as a reflection of Turkey's strong commitment to humanitarian values and principles. Besides, the new law incorporates key elements of international humanitarian and human rights law. It provides for the establishment, under the Ministry of the Interior, of a specialized institution to manage international protection.

² World Food Programme website: <http://www.wfp.org/>

³ UNICEF website: <http://www.unicef.org/tr/en>

⁴ UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency website - October 30, 2013

3. UCLG Middle East Working Group's activities

The report on Syrian Refugees in Turkey⁵ realized by the Agency for Disaster Management (AFAD) shows that refugees outside camps found themselves in harder conditions than refugees inside the camps. Especially food stuff, sleeping materials and heating are missed by refugees living outside camps. AFAD stated “as it is obvious from this discussion a greater percent (about 71-81 percent) of the refugees out of the camps rated all of their basic needs (except the prayer materials) as inadequate as compared to the refugees in the camps. Therefore, the basic needs of the refugees out of the camps are more inadequate than those in the camps and more attention should be paid to the basic needs of the refugees out of the camps”.

When we look at the possibilities for refugees to access aid we can see that the proportion of Syrian refugees out of the camps who received aid from the Humanitarian Aid Agencies is very small. Only about 17 percent of the males and 9 percent of the females out of the camps acknowledge receiving aid from Humanitarian Aid Agencies. The low proportion of those out of the camps who received aid indicates that the Humanitarian Aid Agencies should make an effort to reach in particular to those refugees out of the camps.

Using the experiences led in its member cities UCLG Middle East Working Group will coordinate the implementation of practices in the field of integration of Syrian refugees and collaboration with central government, international organizations and NGOs.

⁵ AFAD (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 2013, p.36.

II. Jordan

1. Summary Findings of the UCLG Delegation for Syrian Refugees

A. Urban refugees

Syrians enter Jordan via Irbid and Mafraq governorates. In the beginning, many of them entered legally and managed to find a place to stay with Jordanian relatives, mostly in northern Jordan (cities and villages in Mafraq governorates). Lately, most Syrians have entered Jordan illegally. Jordanian authorities allow Syrians without passports to enter Jordan. UNHCR registers these refugees. The Jordanian authorities are planning transit camps on the Syrian border.

Jordan is struggling to cope in many respects. Already a poor country relying heavily on money from the US and the Gulf to balance its budget, Jordan is worried about the economic impact of the refugee crisis. Many refugees, fearing the reach of Syria's intelligence service even in exile, choose not to register for a camp and live outside, adding to Jordan's financial burden.

So far Jordanians remain sympathetic to their Syrian guests. But there are worries that economic problems could mutate into political tension. Competition for resources such as jobs, education and health services test the Jordanians' hospitality, especially now that refugee numbers continue to grow. Links between Syrian refugees and Islamists worry Amman. The potential for the destabilization of Jordan grows with every refugee crossing its border.

For example, Mahmood Ehsaad, the deputy Governor of Mafraq, says the pressure on the service capacity of Mafraq city and surrounding villages is tremendous. The population of Mafraq city is 125.000, and apparently, the 'locals' are outnumbered by Syrians at the moment. The army (higher transportation cost), the security department (background checks of certain refugees), and civil defense (more fires, 300 patients per day) are overstretched. Solid waste in the city has gone up by 100 tonnes per day, and this while there are only 2 compressors. Before the influx of refugees, trucks transported 80 tonnes per day, this has gone up to 185 tonnes.

According to Mr. Ehsaad, there is an imminent danger of underground wells in the greater Mafraq region getting contaminated due to the fact that there is no proper sewerage treatment at Al Za'atari (leakage). The availability of drinking water, which is a problem as it is in Jordan, may soon become a huge problem. Treating the waste and sewerage of Al Za' Atari may have to be done at 400 kilometres away from the site (or at least somewhere away from the site).

A general complaint of Mr. Ehsaad is that there are many visiting delegations from abroad, but that very few of the promises of these delegations are materialized. Moreover, there is too little attention for the (Jordanian) host community, which has been heavily tested over the last two years. Housing prices have gone up, school classes have gone from an average of 30 to more than 50 pupils, and poverty among Jordanians is on the increase.

The financial manager of Turra Municipality provides some more specific information. The annual budget of Turra is 1.200.000 Jordanian Dinar. 800.000 JD is received from the government. 60% of the budget goes to the 100 civil servants. 80.000 JD goes to the petrol bill of the garbage trucks. The government has a hard time making the financial transfer. At the same

time, the municipality is burdened to a greater extent as weeks pass. The municipality feels left alone by 'its own' ministry of municipal affairs.

According to the director of health of the governorate, the influx of Syrians into Irbid has led to all kinds of negative effects. The 8 hospitals and 130 medical centres of the governorate have an occupation rate of 100%. One day, 35 critical cases (chest and head wounds) were treated in Ramtha hospital. Border hospitals have taken in many wounded Syrians. Many of the 'ordinary' treatments of Jordanians are being postponed or cancelled altogether. Vaccination campaigns for children have been carried out. There constant fear of outbreaks of diarrhea and hepatitis.

The director of water tells us that Idlib is 100% reliant on underground water. The water is taken from depths of between 200 and 550 meters. Drilling pipes to these depths is possible. Where the aim was to pump up 80 litres in 2013, no more than 60 litres p.p. is reached at the moment. Solutions are to dig new wells and / or to improve existing wells. Another idea is that the government leases privately owned wells. In any case, waste water needs to be treated so that wells don't get contaminated.

B. Needs expressed at the municipal level:

- solid waste management fleet: compressors and trucks for Mafraq city;
- the availability of drinking water has become seriously problematic, (municipal) technical know-how is needed;
- more WASH facilities are needed inside municipalities;
- more school buildings are needed; • more attention for (Jordanian) host community (in the form of 'support the supporters' program?).
- cash assistance / budget support for municipalities (we receive no clear answer to our question whether municipalities are allowed to directly receive cash donations from abroad;
- more / better psychological support programs at the community level
- New wells need to be drilled to maintain the necessary water supply

2. Current Situation in Jordan

There are currently 549,092 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Jordan, of whom approximately half crossed into Jordan in 2013. UNHCR reports that 77 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan, or 422,801 people, live outside of camps, more than half of whom are in northern Jordan. Arrivals have been averaging 300 per night over the past month. Most refugees are crossing via the Eastern border.

UNICEF and partners has begun a polio immunization campaign in Za'atari camp on 27 October in response to news of a suspected polio cases in Syria.

Refugee school enrollment totals 86,170 students, of whom 18,704 are in camp.

A UNICEF/Save the Children Jordan "Obstacles to Schooling" report found that among unregistered children, the leading obstacle was lack of host community school capacity (30 per cent), followed by lack of financial ability (17 per cent) and distance to schools (16 per cent). UNICEF supports double-shifting of 48 schools, and has provided 40 prefab classrooms to host community schools since September.

A. WASH

UNICEF and partners celebrated "Global Handwashing Day" through various events in camps and host communities. JEN organized an event at Irbid's Al Bushra School for girls, involving 450 students (including 100 Syrian students), teachers, parents and representatives from Irbid Education Directorate in events such as stage plays on WASH, drawing competitions, games and songs. In Za'atari, King Abdullah Park and Cyber City camps, some 3,390 children participated in various Global Handwashing Day activities organized by UNICEF/ACTED/JEN/Oxfam. These activities were carried out in Save the Children Child- and Youth-Friendly Spaces, International Relief and Development (IRD) tents, and ACTED tents. Activities included games, drawings, kites, and a demonstration of hand washing.

In host communities, rehabilitation of school WASH facilities is ongoing in 94 schools, and has been completed in 10 schools, benefiting 2,330 Jordanians and 310 Syrian children thus far. Once completed, this effort to improve WASH in 150 host community schools is expected to benefit 23,624 Jordanian children and 8,150 Syrian refugees.

B. Child Protection

Since January, UNICEF and partners have provided psychosocial support services to 104,709 children through 71 Child- and Adolescent-Friendly Spaces (CFS/AFS) in both camps and host communities. In the reporting period, UNICEF/SCI has reached around 5,255 children in Za'atari and KAP with psychosocial support through a network of Child and Youth Friendly Spaces. TdH/UNICEF has reached 3,360 children with psychosocial support and 1,0847 individuals attended awareness raising sessions around child protection. In host communities during the reporting period, UNICEF with its partners UPP/JWU and INTERSOS-JOHUD provided 4,436 children with psychosocial support across seven governorates, while 117 people attended awareness raising session.

C. Education

The number of registered students in the schools in Za'atari Camp and EJC reached 18,704. The highest attendance rate was recorded in Za'atari School II with 91 per cent. With this camp registration figure, the total number of registered students in both camps and host community totals 86,170 (including the Ministry of Education's report of 67,466 refugee students registered in host community schools as of 15 September). UNICEF/NRC held a graduation ceremony on 10 October at the Youth Centre in Za'atari where 96 students graduated after completing the first vocational training programme.

Since the start of the school year in September, UNICEF/ SCJ distributed a total of 33,517 schoolbags containing school supplies in both camps and host community schools. In Za'atari Camp and EJC schools, 9,843 students have received schoolbags, while 23,674 students have received schoolbags in 29 host community schools.

UNICEF/Madrasati Initiative reopened remedial education centres in 11 directorates in Amman, Irbid, Ramtha, Mafraq, Zarka, Russeifeh, Karak and Ma'an. At the start of the second week, the number of enrolled students reached 3,405 children (58 per cent of whom are Syrian).

To increase the capacity of schools, an additional 19 prefabricated classrooms (each benefiting 80 students) were provided for schools in host communities bringing the total number of prefab classrooms provided by UNICEF since the start of the school year in September to 40.

D. Health

UNICEF continues to coordinate with partners on plans for the National Immunization Campaign (NIC) which will take place in November in all 12 governorates and Za'atari camp and will reach some 3.4 million persons living in Jordan. Based on the results of formative research on perceptions, attitudes and practices of key stakeholders, Information Education Communication (IEC) materials were developed for the community, health workers and religious leaders along with an awareness raising campaign.

In the past two months, UNICEF has delivered 3,640,000 doses of Measles-Rubella and 1,000,000 doses of Polio vaccine to be used for the campaign. Following the reports of a suspected polio case in Syria, UNICEF and partners will commence polio immunizations under the National Immunization Campaign earlier than previously planned. A tent-to-tent campaign in Za'atari will begin on 27 October which will reach children under the age of five years old.

The immunization of newly-arrived Syrian refugees against measles and polio and provision of vitamin A in Za'atari and EJC camps continues, conducted by IOM with UNICEF technical support. Measles vaccination is provided to refugees aged six months to 30 years, polio to children 0-15 years, and Vitamin A supplementation to children aged six-59 months. The age of newly-arrived children to be given polio vaccine was raised to 15 years old in response to the suspected cases in Syria. Since IOM has started vaccinating new arrivals (16 April), 52,572 children (six months to 15 years of age and adults 16 – 30 years) have been vaccinated against measles and 15,671 children (0-5 years) against polio. In addition, 14,452 children (6-59 months) were provided with vitamin A supplements.

During the past two weeks, 232 children under five years old visited the eight Oral Rehydration Therapy corners established in Za'atari. The majority were cases of watery diarrhoea with no dehydration, while 13 cases were referred to health facilities and Diarrheal Treatment Units for further assessment. A total of 205 Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) sachets were distributed to children after a demonstration of how to make ORS and dissemination of key messages on how to prevent diarrhoea, importance of hand washing, personal hygiene and environmental sanitation issues.

E. Nutrition

During the past two weeks, 2,570 mothers and 1,262 children under five visited UNICEF/Save the Children Jordan (SCJ) Infant and Young Child Feeding caravans in Za'atari and EJC camps and host community. In addition, 3,121 children under five and lactating mothers received nutritional snacks. Through this project, UNICEF/SCJ provides nutritional support and guidance, including breastfeeding promotion, complementary child feeding, one-to-one counseling, and health education sessions for pregnant/lactating women in the camps and host community.

F. Communications for Development (C4D)

Preparations are being finalized for the national immunization campaign against measles, rubella and polio from 2nd November to 22nd November. IEC materials are currently being printed and will be distributed from 25 October. Formative research is being finalized with two TV channels (Roya and Jordan TV) who will air TV spots and programmes to raise awareness about the upcoming campaign. In addition, local and international NGOs are being mobilized to work at district and community levels.

3. UCLG Middle East Working Group's activities

Following UCLG Middle East Working Group's mission in March 2013 a cry for help was issued by Jordanian local authorities. In September 2013, Ms Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited the Al Zaa'tari camp and exchanged ideas about a municipal approach to the camp with Mr Killian Kleinschmidt, camp manager at UNHCR. Subsequent communication between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, VNG International and the city of Amsterdam resulted in a commitment of Mr Eberhard van der Laan, mayor of Amsterdam, to make capacity available for this initiative. Besides the involvement of the city's officials, there is the involvement of Waternet, an organisation of the municipality of Amsterdam and the regional water board.

Several follow-up missions and workshops in the camp have been held to define the vision and to establish what exactly municipalities from abroad can contribute (e.g. support to regional development, technical expertise in waste and water management, participatory management of public services, coordination with and between various levels of government, and coordination of donor initiatives).

Subsequent efforts went into getting the support of Jordanian authorities such as the Governorate of Al Mafraq, the Ministry of Municipalities, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of the Interior and various sector ministries. His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal expressed his support in a conversation with Ms Melanie Schultz van Haegen, Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment, in November 2013.

III. Lebanon

1. Summary Findings of the UCLG Delegation for Syrian Refugees

Local Government services have been deeply affected by the presence of Syrian refugees. The town of Saadnayel, which population is 15,000 inhabitants hosts 18,000 refugees. In terms of garbage collection this situation represents an extra-cost of 5000\$ per month for the municipality. In Kab Elias where Syrian refugees represent two thirds of the population, the municipality tries to make some efforts to help the refugees but their budget is very limited.

The Mayor of Kab Elias presents the needs of the municipality as follow:

- Health problems including epidemics and lice.
- Water supply networks do not include areas where the refugees are located which creates a lot of problems both for refugees and the host community.
- Waste collection, the municipality does not have the necessary material to collect the waste in all area hosting refugees.
- Illegal connections on the electrical network induce frequent power cuts and it became necessary to develop the capacity of production of electricity of the municipality.
- The municipality already increased the number of policemen (from 4 to 14) in the town but support could be requested if refugees continue to arrive massively.

2. Current situation in Lebanon

Refugees fleeing violence in Syria are in need of protection and assistance from their arrival in Lebanon at the border, and throughout the length of their stay in the country. Syrian refugees are exposed to high risk of protection violations during flight and asylum. More restrictive border controls are in place, including lack of access due to damaged documentation and re-verification of personal documentation. There is a need for enhanced border monitoring at official and unofficial border points.

A growing numbers of refugees are in an irregular situation, which could lead to protection violations, including detention, limited freedom of movement, exploitation and difficult access to basic services, insecurity, rising tensions with host communities, and eviction. Increased numbers of Individual and communal shelter options are needed to respond to increased needs of Syrian refugees, in particular those with specific needs.

257,670 persons are identified with specific needs, including disabilities, older persons, women and children at risk, serious medical conditions and SGBV survivors. Vulnerability increases as displacement becomes protracted and the limited resources of refugees are depleted.

Registered: 729,928

Households: 166,008

Waiting for registration: 84,074

Total: 814,002

Lebanese government estimations: 1,000,000

In September 2013 over 13,800 persons registered with UNHCR, bringing the total number of Syrian refugees assisted by UNHCR and partners to over 779,000 (over 691,900 people registered and 101,000 awaiting registration).

Current geographical distribution of the registered population is as follows:

- North Lebanon: 219,500
- Bekaa: 231,400
- Beirut and Mount Lebanon: 148,600
- South Lebanon: 92,200

UNHCR and Terre des Hommes organized the transportation from different villages in Marjaayoun to the Tyre registration centre of over 285 refugees unable to pay for their transport from remote areas in South Lebanon. The same was implemented in Mount Lebanon with 422 refugees transported to the Beirut registration center. The process will continue throughout October to facilitate the registration of vulnerable refugees.

A. Protection

UNHCR and DRC started provided psychosocial activities to refugee children in tented settlements and collective shelters in the Bekaa. This includes recreational activities and counseling. Work is now underway with local municipalities to identify additional venues where such activities could be held.

UNICEF and partners provided psychosocial support to over 11,000 children across Lebanon. Additionally, UNICEF, UNHCR and partners have provided over 5,500 women with awareness sessions on prevention from gender-based violence.

B. Distribution

Over 7,000 refugees received mattresses, bed sheets, kitchen sets and other household items from UNHCR, DRC, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre (CLMC) and Makhzoumi Foundation.

C. Health

UNICEF is providing medical supplies to build the capacity of clinics in the Bekaa (Aarsal, Hermel, Baalbek, Majdel Anjar and Al Marj) and in Tripoli (Jabal Mohsen, Bab el Tabanneh and Dar el Zahraa). The clinics treated 8,078 Syrian refugee outpatients, including 1,630 children under the age of five – 784 of whom were suffering from acute respiratory infections. Antenatal care consultations were provided to 359 pregnant women.

Twelve Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) supported by UNHCR and IMC provided primary health care and information to refugees. Respiratory tract infection, diarrhoea and skin disease remain the top three health problems reported through MMUs. While some cases were treated on site, some were referred to clinics for further care.

D. Shelters

The risk of eviction continues to be a pressing one. UNHCR and agencies are providing cash for rent or offering the most vulnerable refugees to relocate to other shelters while mediating with landlords to mitigate eviction risks. Some local community leaders have played a very constructive role in delaying possible evictions in certain areas, buying agencies more time to identify alternative solutions for refugees.

Shelter remains one of the most pressing challenges in the refugee response. Three homeless Syrian families in Beirut were provided with shelter and cash assistance through Makhzoumi Foundation. This brings the total number of people benefiting from cash for rent in Beirut since 2013 to 220.

E. Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH)

Over 91,000 refugees benefited from the distribution of hygiene and baby kits and hygiene coupons provided by UNHCR, Premiere Urgence (PU-AMI), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Makhzoumi Foundation, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre (CLMC) and World Vision.

UNICEF's implementing partners, Solidarites International and PU-AMI have provided 2,379 people with access to potable water. Additionally, PU-AMI have provided a further 391 beneficiaries with access to toilets and sanitation services. With UNICEF support, Solidarites have also provided hygiene promotion sessions to 2,095 individuals.

ACTED visited 33 refugee households to determine their water and sanitation needs this week. Identified problems include lack of washing facilities and water storage capacity, damaged toilets, as well as a lack of information about available potable water sources. To address these issues, ACTED will rehabilitate/construct hand-washing facilities, conduct water quality testing and filter distribution, as well as hygiene promotion activities to improve general living standards and reduce current health issues including diarrhoea.

F. 2013 priority areas

- Formal education in public schools
- Non-formal education through accelerated learning and Basic Non Formal Programs
- After school learning support
- School supplies, equipment and rehabilitation including WASH

3. Community Support Programme (CSP)

The presence of over 770,000 Syrian refugees in over 1,580 locations in Lebanon is placing an immense strain on host communities, many of which were already among the poorest in the country. As the crisis extends, the pressures on Lebanon deepen. A recent World Bank assessment¹ estimates that the Syrian crisis has cost the country billions of dollars in lost economic activity for the period 2012-14. The refugee influx has placed increased pressure on already fragile electricity, water, sanitation, transport, health and education sectors. With more people in the labor market, wages are dropping and unemployment rates of Lebanese have reportedly increased.

As the country grapples with its own political and internal divisions, the additional pressures brought on by a massive refugee influx are fraying nerves. There is a growing sense that the Lebanese are being asked to continue to accommodate a seemingly endless stream of refugees, without commensurate support. Consequently, tensions between Lebanese and refugee communities in some areas are on the rise.

Vulnerable Lebanese are feeling the effects, as they compete for the same basic services, including limited income opportunities, as the refugees. In many host communities, particularly in areas where large number of refugees live, increased support is needed to ensure access to infrastructure and basic services such as the health care, public education, water and sanitation, and energy supply.

- 10 community support projects (CSP) were completed, benefitting 547,500 Lebanese and 52,368 Syrian refugees.

- Projects were completed in the sectors of agriculture, water, education/skills training, infrastructure and road rehabilitation, sanitation and solid waste management. Vocational, education, community and sports centres were constructed.
- The CSP Working Group in the Bekaa was formally constituted. The first meeting was held with the active participation of partners.
- Additional funds were received from the European Union to bolster conflict prevention mechanisms in selected tension-ridden communities.

A. Challenges

The scale of the needs belies the fact that a number of efforts have been made to support communities hosting refugees. The latter include: a broad range of projects aimed at mitigating the effects of displacement on host communities, mainstreaming of assistance to host communities across broader humanitarian programming, as well as projects building national capacities at the ministerial and municipal level, or directly benefitting local communities. Planning and implementation of assistance efforts are further complicated by the scattered location of refugees. There is so far no consolidated or comprehensive needs assessment that would guide the planning of interventions. Moreover, the continuing increase in needs requires constant programmatic adjustments, which in turn, poses challenges for partners to plan and implement.

B. Strategy

The overarching goal of UNHCR's community support programme is to ensure protection space by supporting communities that are hosting refugees, as well as by providing individual support. Efforts to this end will include:

Infrastructural interventions at the community level; Enhancing livelihood opportunities of host communities and refugees through skills training, capacity building and enhancement of production capacities; and Identifying and addressing both the real and perceived causes of conflicts and tensions attributed to the presence of Syrian refugees through social cohesion projects; Strengthening community capacity for dispute resolution and conflict management in affected host communities throughout Lebanon; The Government of Lebanon, as well as host communities, refugees, civil society and local leaders, will continue to be involved in the identification of needs and conflict risks, as well as in the planning and implementation of the broad range of interventions benefitting host communities and refugees.

C. UNHCR implementing partners

Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Relief and Development (IRD), Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale (PU-AMI), Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention For Local Development (SHEILD), International Orthodox Christian Charities, USA (IOCC-USA), Right to Play, UNDP, UNOPS, Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF), ACTED, CISP, Al Majmoua, Oxfam GB, Concern Worldwide.

4. UCLG Middle East Working Group's activities

Following UCLG Middle East Working Group's mission in March 2013 Cités Unies France (CUF) issued a call for support amongst its members to support Lebanese local authorities hosting Syrian refugees. Selected projects will be implemented in collaboration with the French Development Agency.

Conclusion

After 32 months of conflict the Syrian crisis has caused displacement of more than 2 million outside of Syria and more than 7 million internal refugees. UN Agencies and NGOs are currently working on the 6th Regional Response Plan (RRP) which assesses the needs Syrian refugees have to face. While considering the previous RRP's we are forced to observe that local authorities are not included in the planning of its budget. The only initiative for local authorities took place in Lebanon with the Community Support Program (CSP); even in this case only a marginal part of the budget allocated to Lebanon has been affected to support local governments (0,1%).

In order to comply with their responsibilities, local authorities are calling for urgent support. The important work deployed by NGOs and UN agencies in the region cannot and should not replace local government tasks and responsibilities, specific support to local governments is becoming critical to guarantee social stability.

In this context the UCLG Middle East Working Group urges NGO's, national and international institutions to include local authorities in their humanitarian response to increase aid efficiency and to protect the region stability.

As the Syrian crisis affects many countries of the Middle East and West Asia region and as an international association of local governments, the UCLG Middle East Working Group calls UCLG members to participate in the actions of solidarity.

As a platform of local and regional governments, UCLG-MEWA will support and promote the municipalities' actions for the Syrian refugees. Sharing of experiences in this field will allow our organization to promote best practices and to structure local authorities answer to humanitarian crisis. Moreover the cooperation among the local governments, NGOs and international organizations should also strengthen the actions of local governments and be more efficient on the ground.