



STABILIZATION & RESILIENCE IN PROTRACTED, POLITICALLY-INDUCED EMERGENCIES: *A Case Study Exploration of Lebanon*

UNDP with Mercy Corps

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ACRONYMS

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
DFID	Department for International Development
EdL	Electricité Du Liban
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
LCRP	Lebanese Crisis Response Plan
LIHF	Lebanon International Humanitarian Forum
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RRP	Regional Refugee Plan
RTO	Regional Technical Offices
SDC	Social Development Centers
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
VTE	Vocational Training and Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concept of resilience offers a framework and vocabulary that facilitates cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary dialogue and learning and pushes us to examine systems that influence complex situations. To date, resilience thinking primarily focuses on natural disasters and climate change; it has not been extensively applied to politically-induced emergency situations. UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Mercy Corps conducted research to explore this intersection using Lebanon as a case study. More specifically, this paper examines what resilience means in the context of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon, and what programmatic interventions outlined in the 2015 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) can support stabilization, while at the same time facilitating greater resilience in Lebanon.

Starting in 2011, Syria's critical situation caused a range of spillover affects into neighboring Lebanon that resulted in a series of shocks and stresses on this small country, especially given the prolonged nature of the crisis. Interviews for this research were conducted in Lebanon from November/December 2014 with a variety of actors and observers, including senior central government officials as well as government officials at the provincial, district and municipal levels, along with social agencies, UN agencies, donors, international and national NGOs, business leaders, and groups of young Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians. All affirmed that the spillover affects created by the Syria's crisis generated increasingly politically charged dynamics, resulting in greater instability in Lebanon—namely pressures on sectarian relations and resources-based tensions due to the massive number of refugees.

Resilience literature outlines the importance of building absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities to engage systems to promote stability and ultimately positive development outcomes. Strengthening resilience capacities in politically-induced emergencies cannot be limited to absorptive or adaptive capacities, rather should also lay the foundations for transformative capacity. Resilience requires that all three capacities work together for long-term benefits for communities. While resilience is often perceived as a distant goal, difficult to achieve or to focus on in the midst of an emergency, a politically-induced crisis offers opportunities to work toward greater systematic changes that can transform structures within a country or a community to increase resilience to identified shocks and stresses. Resilience-building capacities at multiple levels can and should be addressed within a humanitarian response by prioritizing a resilience approach and analyzing the evolving context using a resilience lens within an emergency situation when appropriate. Sufficient time and effort is required to understand the underlying system dynamics to identify key entry points that will help align humanitarian responses towards building transformative capacity so communities can sustain and grow their development objectives over time. In Lebanon, this can be focused on building sub-national structures and networks to more effectively prepare for, absorb and adapt to current and future shocks and stresses. This will strengthen Lebanon's political, social and economic systems to create greater localized decision-making and greater equity of services, and ultimately greater well-being outcomes to Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian communities.

With the understanding that the most appropriate solutions will “emerge” naturally if the conditions for learning and sharing are fostered, Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) is well positioned to serve as a guide for programming. It will be most effective if activities are conceived as a rapid succession of short cycle, carefully monitored projects which can be measured and analyzed to inform longer-term learning and progress toward proving a larger theory of change on achieving positive outcomes. Skills that enable and promote adaptive design and management are key to this approach. The LCRP incorporates priority measures articulated in the Government of Lebanon's *2013 Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict* to expedite strategies and funding to mitigate the impact of the crisis on Lebanon's stability.¹ This document offers a series of interrelated recommendations focused on sub-national level interventions that could foster greater learning and build resilience in Lebanon for the health and wellbeing of communities in light of current and anticipated cycles of future emergencies. Many of these interventions are included in the LCRP, and as stakeholders move to implement these activities, they are encouraged to maintain openness towards innovation, experimentation and learning that is characteristic of resilience-building strategies. There should be a strong emphasis on the interface between “order and chaos”² and between local government and the people, empowering local actors to arrive at a variety of context-based solutions by delegating decision-making and allocating resources at that level.

1) Within the LCRP, stabilization is defined as strengthening national capacities to address long-term poverty and social tensions while also meeting humanitarian needs.

2) Ramalingam 2008.

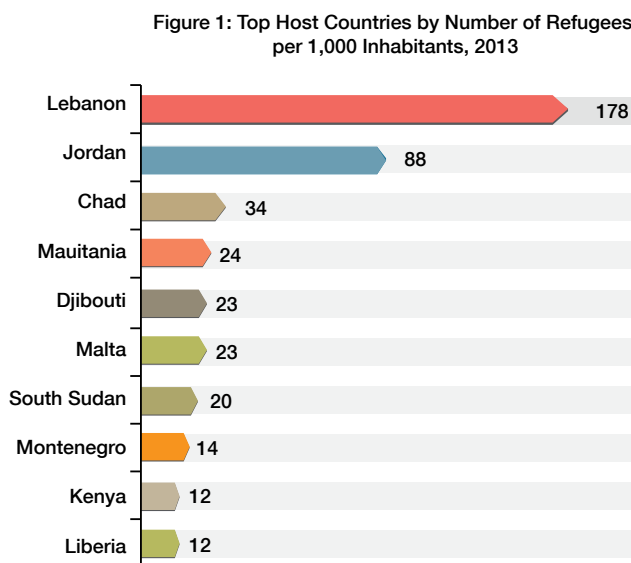
BACKGROUND



1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Lebanon and the Syrian Crisis

The conflict in Syria, which began in the spring of 2011, is in its fourth year, with no visible solution in sight. The conflict has had a devastating effect on Syria and its neighboring countries, with over 6.5 million internally displaced in Syria and 3 million people fleeing the country, of which the largest proportion, an estimated 1.5 million, have crossed into Lebanon, including about 52,000 twice-displaced Palestinians. This represents about 30% of the Lebanese population before the crisis, estimated at 4.2 million and adds to a pre-existing Palestinian refugee population of about 280,000. This makes Lebanon the country with the highest per-capita hosting ratio worldwide (Figure 1).³ There are no official camps in Lebanon, so most displaced people from Syria are staying in host communities and Informal Settlements spread around the country, in over 1,750 geographical areas, placing a tremendous burden on host communities, stretching their already scarce resources and exacerbating many of their chronic underlying problems. In a country of four million people, the number of poor Lebanese has risen by two-thirds since 2011 and Lebanese unemployment has doubled. Children and youth are most affected by the four years of economic hardship and strain on social services.



Source : UNHCR 2014b.

1.2 The Evolving Response to the Refugee Crisis

Since 2011, the international community helped Lebanon deal with this crisis through a massive humanitarian response developed through successive *Regional Response Plans* (RRP), the latest edition of which is RRP6 in 2014. The plan classifies expected outputs into three categories: 1) life-saving or preventing immediate risk of harm; 2) preventing deterioration of vulnerabilities; and 3) strengthening capacity and resilience among refugees and host communities.⁴

As the crisis evolved and the flow of people across the border skyrocketed, in September 2013, an *Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* prepared by the World Bank and the United Nations⁵ brought to light the negative impacts of the crisis on development gains in Lebanon. It shared declining human development metrics and growth trends and the fact that increasing social tensions put the country's stability at risk.

In November 2013, the Government of Lebanon, again with the support of the World Bank and the United Nations, prepared the "Lebanon Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict."⁶ A meeting of the Regional United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in Amman in November 2013 led to a general recognition that humanitarian funding was neither sufficient nor sustainable in light of the above analysis, and that a more "development-oriented" approach was necessary "to build the

3) LCRP, 2014.

4) See UNHCR 2013 for the Lebanon Version of the RRP6. Also Bailey 2014 provides a comprehensive overview of the response strategies to date.

5) WNLBN 2013a.

6) WNLBN 2013b.

resilience of individuals and communities and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance over time”.⁷ The UNDG also call for “a robust and coordinated development response that complements humanitarian efforts and fosters resilience.”⁸ In response to this call, a policy note was developed to define a “resilience-based response” to the crisis, which seeks to move the response from humanitarian relief towards development through the continuum of coping, recovering and sustaining.⁹ An accompanying *Comprehensive Regional Strategy Framework (CRSF)* was developed¹⁰ “to enable humanitarian, resilience / development and macro-fiscal interventions to collectively and simultaneously contribute to the shared goals of meeting immediate protection and assistance needs; building the resilience of households, communities and systems; strengthening national leadership and ownership; and supporting regional stability”¹¹. However, the CRSF was never finished nor implemented.

Instead, to advance these concepts, a comprehensive country-driven, regionally coordinated planning process for 2015-2016, known as the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), was implemented and the final document launched.¹² Within the 3RP, the UN, under the leadership of the UN’s Resident Coordinator, and the Government of Lebanon developed the two-year *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP)*.¹³ The LCRP is designed to 1) ensure humanitarian assistance and protection 2) strengthen national and local service delivery systems and 3) reinforce Lebanon’s economic, social, environment, and institutional stability.¹⁴ In short, it integrates a targeted humanitarian response into a broader plan to support Lebanon’s stabilization, with an emphasis on investment in service and social welfare systems, job creation and conflict mitigation in high-risk parts of the country using Lebanese systems to channel international financing. While the Government of Lebanon is focused on prioritizing stabilization, there are elements of this effort that can more intentionally build absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities, contributing to Lebanon’s ability to build resilience to shocks and stresses, now and into the future.

1.3 Purpose of This Paper

The research documented in this paper emanates from the shared desire of UNDP and Mercy Corps to explore the meaning and application of resilience thinking in the specific context of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon. Building on the LCRP planning, this document is an initial exploratory review that aims to build upon the UNDP’s emerging resilience framework, programming and formal mandate as well as the Government of Lebanon’s prioritization of addressing systematic needs. Mercy Corps offers its global and regional experience researching, measuring and operationalizing resilience in its country strategies and programs to examine the situation further.

This paper builds on a May 2014 UNDP commissioned review of vulnerability criteria and frameworks in the context of resilience-based response to the Syrian crisis and is based on an extensive literature review on resilience in conflict settings, analysis of documents related to the Syrian crisis¹⁵ as it is unfolding in Lebanon and on the Lebanese system itself. It also draws on a large number of interviews and focus group discussions with a range of actors and observers including senior central government officials as well as government officials at the provincial, district and municipal levels, social agencies, UN agencies, donors, international and national NGOs, business leaders and groups of young Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians.¹⁶

7) UNDG 2014.

8) UNDG 2014.

9) UNDG 2014.

10) UN CRSF 2014.

11) Ibid. p.3.

12) UNDP 2014a.

13) UNDP 2014b.

14) LCRP, 2014

15) Bailey 2014.

16) A complete list of Interviews is available in Appendix A.

The key questions the paper seeks to address include:

1. What does resilience mean in the context of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon?
2. How does a resilience framework apply to the response to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon?
3. What programmatic interventions would most effectively build resilience?

In this paper, we consider some resilience concepts and explore its meaning in the context of politically-induced emergencies—though it is by no means exhaustive. In coordination with the LCRP launched in January 2015, this research helps generate additional thinking to examine issues of resilience in Lebanon in the context of the Syria crisis. This includes an understanding of the underlying dynamics of the Lebanese system, and the identification of entry points to building resilience capacities. All of this aims to create an increased understanding of Syrian crisis dynamics as it spills over in Lebanon and potential programmatic responses to build greater resilience capacities for the benefit of communities and the systems that support them.

RESILIENCE IN POLITICALLY-INDUCED EMERGENCIES



2. RESILIENCE IN POLITICALLY-INDUCED EMERGENCIES

2.1 Resilience Frameworks

While definitions vary, the concept of resilience generally denotes a capacity to anticipate, mitigate, respond to, and influence the impact of shocks and stresses.¹⁷

The concept of resilience offers a framework and vocabulary that facilitates cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary dialogue and learning. It comes at a critical time, fuelled by deepening and accelerating crises, where previous attempts at development were unable to scale. Resilience thinking now forces us to address risk explicitly in our plans and to emphasize the important aspects of development intervention that we tended to overlook, particularly the difficult issues of governance and structural change. There has been a gap between knowledge and action in the development field—resilience thinking helps begin to bridge that gap.

A large number of definitions of resilience and resilience frameworks can be found in the literature. For the purposes of this paper, the different frameworks of UNDP, OECD, UNICEF, FAO, DFID, SDC and Mercy Corps, as well as the framework adopted by the undg in response to the Syrian Crisis were reviewed.¹⁸ Most NGOs operating in Lebanon either do not have a clear resilience framework or are still working on developing or adopting one.¹⁹ While all these frameworks generally differ only slightly in their main elements, the greatest distinction is perhaps in their perceptions of the desired outcome of resilience building and whether resilience is an element of stability or of change.

An important element is a system's ability to anticipate, mitigate, plan for, react to, learn from, take advantage of, and influence shocks or stresses, which depends on its response capacity. Three different types of response capacity were identified by most frameworks: absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities.²⁰ Most definitions align with that shared by Mark Conostas of Cornell University and his colleagues, who provide the following:

- » **Absorptive capacity:** *the ability to minimize exposure to shocks and stresses through preventative measures and appropriate coping strategies to avoid permanent, negative impacts;*
- » **Adaptive capacity:** *making proactive and informed choices about alternative strategies based on an understanding of changing conditions; and*
- » **Transformative capacity:** *the governance mechanisms, policies/regulations, infrastructure, community networks, and formal and informal social protection mechanisms that constitute the enabling environment for systemic change.*^{21 22}

17) For an overview of resilience concepts, definitions and discussion, see Rushdy & Mercy Corps 2012, Sudmeier 2014, De Weijer 2013, Levine 2014, Davoudi 2012.

18) UNDP 2014c, UNDP 2014d, Bailey 2014, OECD 2014b, UNICEF 2014a, UNICEF 2014b, FAO 2014, DFID 2011, SDC 2012, SDC 2014, Mercy Corps 2013, Mercy Corps 2013b, and undg 2014.

19) Focus Group Discussion with INGOs at LIHF.

20) Bene 2012.

21) Conostas 2014.

22) At the time of writing, UN agencies were considering the key terms “coping, recovering, transforming” as part of their resilience-based response framework. While different concepts, there are similarities to the framework proposed above. It was outside the scope of this paper to compare and contrast these terms.

2.2 Characteristics of Resilient Systems

The field of resilience is dynamic, the debate is raging and concepts are evolving rapidly. But, despite the diversity of approaches, it is still possible to extract some key characteristics of resilient systems as summarized in Box 1.²³

BOX 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF POSITIVE RESILIENT SYSTEMS

1. The acceptance of **flexibility, change and non-linearity**, which shifts policy from an attempt to control change and create stability to managing the capacity of systems to cope with, adapt to, and create pathways for change.
2. A high level of **diversity** in systems and groups performing different functions in an ecosystem. Building **redundancy and safe failure**, allowing multiple pathways to co-exist, rather than focusing on optimization and efficiency, which actually make a system more vulnerable.
3. **Effective governance and institutions**, which allow for people and organizations to be connected, informed and resourceful, and may enhance community cohesion.
4. Taking into account **multiple narratives** valuing the fact that situations can be perceived from many different angles, fostering the interchange of perspectives and creating spaces for social innovations to emerge.
5. A high degree of **social and economic equity** exists in inclusive systems; resilience programs consider issues of justice and equity when distributing risks within communities.
6. The importance of **social values and structures is acknowledged** because association between individuals can have a positive impact on cooperation in a community which may lead to more equal access to natural resources and greater resilience; community members would be honoured.
7. **Continual and effective learning** is important. This may take the form of iterative policy/institutional processes, organizational learning, reflective practice, adaptive management and may merge with the concept of adaptive capacity.
8. Resilient systems take a **cross-scalar perspective** of events and occurrences. Resilience is built through social, political, economic and cultural networks that reach from the local to the global scale.

Resilience building is the process of developing systems with these characteristics. It requires understanding the risk landscape and dealing with it explicitly, and identifying existing vulnerabilities and capacities as a starting point. It involves accepting that the systems we are acting on are complex and non-linear and that they will react in many unexpected ways to our interventions, so that it is essential to start simply and develop the capacity to learn and act in a sequence of short cycles of action and reflection, in order to include multiple perspectives, build trust, cohesion and rich relationships and manage conflict. It also requires addressing the structural causes of poverty and vulnerability, expanding opportunities for asset creation, empowering youth as change agents and eliciting the full participation of women in identifying innovative responses. In essence, it requires working on interventions that together strengthen absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities, working simultaneously at multiple temporal, geographic and governance scales from household to national, regional and global systems.²⁴

23) Rushdy & Mercy Corps 2012.

24) Ibid. and Mercy Corps 2013.

2.3 Resilience in Politically-induced Emergencies

With this thinking in mind, how do these principles apply in politically-induced emergencies? We examine here first the nature of such emergencies and what is known so far about building resilience in such contexts.

2.3.1 The Nature of Politically-induced Emergencies

Most of the literature on resilience focuses on discrete disasters, climate change-related stresses or the transformation required everywhere for global resilience, but seen as a longer term process. A politically-induced humanitarian situation, a conflict or conflict-affected situation, differs from these situations in several ways. They are more likely to be a protracted crisis than a discrete event, as resolving the conflict is never easy or straightforward. They usually involve refugees or internally displaced persons, which is never neutral and often politically charged, with complex connections among various groups. Even if the conflict-affected community is primarily a hosting community, it is usually located in a conflict prone region and may itself contain the seeds of conflict and instability, such that the shock, even if it is external, may trigger internal conflict as a result of the pre-existing, unstable underlying dynamics. These assumptions inform our understanding of politically-induced emergencies, which apply to the case of Lebanon, as it is not in a state of conflict, but it is affected by an external conflict that exacerbates existing tensions and has the potential to lead to conflict.

In such cases, the distinction between shocks and stresses may become nebulous because the crisis is not a “neutral” external event, but a politically-charged occurrence. Addressing politically-induced emergencies cannot be limited to coping and adapting: laying the foundations for transformation is imperative to enabling wider-scale change to strengthen systems that promote more inclusive decision-making, address grievances, and enable inclusive resource accessibility, often key drivers of conflict and instability. Nevertheless, taking steps to help communities absorb and adapt in light of the effects of a politically-induced crisis and maintain their positive development trajectory are key elements that will help build the transformative capacity of the social and economic structures that can have a positive effect on power dynamics, on which there is rich discourse.^{25 26}

2.3.2 Existing writing on conflict and resilience

There is a range of literature about resilience, though it is fairly limited in its discussion about its intersection with conflict. To inform this discussion, the section below outlines some of the key characteristics we should consider when examining this intersection to inform applicability to the situation in Lebanon, as affected by the Syria Crisis.

Defining resilience in conflict-induced crises is much more difficult than for natural shocks and stresses because while resilience to natural disasters is clearly a good thing, in social situations defining “good” resilience is complicated.²⁷ The questions of resilience of what, to what, and for whom become crucial, and it becomes much more important to understand the *dynamics of the underlying system*, how conflict is affected by the other system or systems, and how the other systems affect the conflict dynamics. It is also necessary to identify some of its dynamics, how far it is from the characteristics of a resilient system and what capacities are needed to get it there. In Lebanon, this requires understanding the confessional²⁸ system dynamics, how this system is manifested across all levels of society and influences access to power from individuals to communities and how it creates cycles of conflict.

A wide range of authors emphasize that to apply resilience thinking, we must first have a deep granular

25) See for example Hudson 2014, Swyngedouw 2013.

26) See for example Swyngedouw 2013, Levine 2014, Van Metre 2014, Westley 2011, O’Brian 2013, Revi 2014, Redclift 2011, Pelling 2012.

27) See for example Duit 2010.

28) Confessionalism is a system of government that refers to a mix of religion and politics, whereby political and institutional power is proportionally distributed among religious communities.

understanding of *existing local capacities* for resilience, especially as it can shift relatively quickly.²⁹

Outside agencies must understand existing local capacity at a national and sub-national level—not focus exclusively on vulnerability. One study in Palestine found that discussion of capacities was entirely new to the local population; they were used to only being asked about their vulnerabilities.³⁰ To achieve this understanding, there needs to be an overarching framework across a given location, but communities are “unique and have their own local needs, experiences, resources, and ideas about prevention of, protection against, response to, and recovery from different types of disasters.”³¹ Likewise, communities are important sources of information.³² Civil society in Lebanon is an important entry point to understand local capacity, both within this sector and in the communities they engage.

Building on this concept, *horizontal networks*, also known as bridging social capital,³³ are found to be strong contributors to resilience, as “the more interconnected communities are, the less likely they are to resort to violence in order to solve disputes and the more incentive they will have to stop conflict from festering.”³⁴ In such situations, the availability of a trusted source of information is seen as one of the most important resilience assets that any individual or group can have.³⁵

Governance was also highlighted as an important contributor to resilience, as countries with weak governance systems tend to be further behind on development but also more vulnerable to shocks and stresses.³⁶

The kinds of stressors to focus on in such situations include corruption, patronage, clientelism, and the marginalization of certain communities.³⁷

Most enduring conflicts are seen to revolve around issues over values that prevent groups to even imagine other views and this is strengthened by fear, isolation and ignorance, all of which must be addressed if the dynamics of the system are to be altered in positive directions.³⁸

Within the realm of governance, one writer emphasizes that we should change our thinking from “best practices” to “good principles,” sharing ideas that are of interest but acting as facilitators, so that communities are leading their response.³⁹

Conflicts are often due to ingrained “*poverty traps*”. Economic dynamics most often fuel conflict and reducing the resilience of a (negative) social-ecological poverty trap requires weakening the feedback loops that maintain them and strengthening those that lead to more sustainable and equitable system that promote improved distribution of wealth or access to markets.⁴⁰

In Lebanon, many of the conflicts stemming from the community level are based on grievances with pre-existing poverty and how the Syria Crisis worsened the situation.

Economic dynamics are also linked to environmental resource issues. While we focus on an emergency resulting from politically-induced conflict, it is important to acknowledge that these conflicts are often

29) Menkhaus 2013, pg. 6.

30) Hanley, pg. 10.

31) Longstaff 2010, pg. 2-3.

32) Agarwal 2014, pg. 21.

33) Mercy Corps defines social capital as an asset, drawing on interpersonal connections and networks. Bonding social capital denotes ties in a homogeneous community or group; bridging encompasses connections between groups from different nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, or other identity groups; and linking refers to the ability of individuals and groups to connect with people who have access to external resources or power.

34) Kubitschek 2013.

35) Longstaff 2005.

36) Breisinger 2014, pg. 5.

37) Kubitschek 2013.

38) Stephenson 2010

39) Ramalingam 2008, pg. 30.

40) Haider 2012.

accompanied by *environmental resource issues*, as emphasized by studies on the Syrian conflict, which point out that the countries affected by the crisis also suffer from a strain on resource management and availability, particularly water, and that the conflict and resource based issues “only reinforce each other.”⁴¹ Also, as Lebanon hosts the highest percentage of refugees, in relation to the overall population of any country in the world, there are major concerns about the ecological strains based on the increased population, namely water and sanitation, which is generating tensions.

While often promoted in conflict situations, stabilization is very much focused on coping or absorbing a shock and carries implicitly the connotation that things are returning to “normal”, whereas the normal may not be a desirable situation. Stabilization approaches are known to have often “entrenched conflict drivers and preserved cultures of conflict.”⁴² In such cases, while transformation may appear more distant and more risky, it is kept at the forefront of our analysis, approaches, strategies and action. In peace-building contexts it has been found that “resilience cannot be postponed to a distant future; it has to be supported from day one of any peacebuilding project, even in the most adverse circumstances.”⁴³

Thus if the crisis is analyzed through a resilience lens, the steps needed to absorb the shock and thereby obtain stabilization can be taken while being cognizant of and actively working towards those elements in society that should be adapting and transforming so the community is more resilient in the future. While the literature focuses on active conflict, which is not the case of Lebanon, there is a threat that tensions and disputes can lead to conflict, which makes many of these points relevant to Lebanon.

2.3.3 Proposed Analysis

While stabilization is essential to prevent a situation from deteriorating, (and thus includes elements of coping and adaptation), transformation is needed to address the root causes of instability and conflict. Neither of these can hope to achieve resilience alone and they must go hand-in-hand and reinforce each other.

Aiming for stability alone will not achieve resilience, but while transformation is often perceived as a distant goal, difficult to achieve or to focus on in the midst of a crisis, the path to stabilization can lead to resilience if it builds the foundations of capacities needed for transformation and if the opportunities for transformation presented by a crisis are seized and addressed simultaneously with the humanitarian response.

In the words of Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator at a 2014 conference,

*“Our approach also emphasizes the importance of transforming the structures and systems which repeatedly perpetuate fragility and undermine resilience... External shocks can open up the space required to initiate transformation, but only if opportunities to negotiate a different, more inclusive, and fairer future, and lay the foundations for political, institutional, social and economic reform, are seized.”*⁴⁴

In a highly fluid, complex politically-induced emergency, a static prescriptive framework with a specific recipe or methodology for application will not work. What is needed in this situation is a more dynamic resilience approach, rooted in the interface between crisis and opportunity, with modeling, testing and learning from applications, and the fostering of more proven, innovative responses linking stabilization, adaption and transformation.

In seeking to apply resilience concepts to the situation in Lebanon, therefore, the analysis that informs this research is summarized in Box 2.

41) Hatokay et. al. 2014.

42) Van Metre 2014.

43) Ibid.

44) Clark 2014.

BOX 2: ANALYSIS TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN POLITICALLY-INDUCED EMERGENCIES

- 1. Understand vulnerabilities and capacities of people and the systems in which they live:** Have diverse groups of people reflect on the dynamics of the each of the underlying systems before the current crisis. How are different people vulnerable in different ways? Consider the varying experiences of women, men, boys, and girls; youth; elderly people; persons with disabilities; and other traditionally marginalized groups in the community, such as certain ethnic or religious groups. What trends indicate the path it was on? What are historical roots of current dynamics? What are some key causal loops that explain the behaviour of the current system? How far is it from a desired sustainable development path? What is preventing it from moving in that direction?
- 2. Identify entry points to lead towards building resilience capacities for a sustainable development path:** Understand that in any system there are strong mechanisms that maintain the status quo and negate any direct attempts at changing them, but that there are also points of high potential leverage that can be triggered. Seek to identify the most promising such entry points that have the potential to alter system dynamics in the long term.
- 3. Understand the underlying shocks and stresses affecting the crisis dynamics:** Analyse how the current crisis is unfolding, how the underlying systems are responding to or affecting the crisis (accentuating or mitigating it) and the effects that initial humanitarian interventions are having on the system.
- 4. Identify the required humanitarian responses to the evolving crisis dynamics:** Based on the above analysis, identify the absorptive and adaptive capacities that need to be developed to improve the response to the crisis (those that will help stabilization and avoid escalation or deepening of the crisis).
- 5. Modify these responses to align them to the transformative entry points:** Compare the actions considered, and particularly the emerging adaptive actions, to the transformative entry points identified above and find ways to modify them so that they consciously contribute to laying the foundation for transformation; leverage their transformative effects.

APPLYING RESILIENCE CONCEPTS TO LEBANON GIVEN THE IMPACT OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS



Lebanon - Beirut Southern Suburbs

3. APPLYING RESILIENCE CONCEPTS TO LEBANON GIVEN THE IMPACT OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS

The framework proposed in Box 2 is used in attempting to apply concepts of resilience in Lebanon in the particular context of the unfolding Syrian crisis.

3.1 Dynamics of the Lebanese System

It is often observed that Lebanon has so far been remarkably resilient in the face of the Syrian crisis and weathered several other preceding crises. One interviewee said, “We [in Lebanon] are used to that.”⁴⁵

A closer analysis conducted during key informant interviews for this research, however, reveals that much of what is taken as resilience is in fact what could be termed “negative societal coping”, a set of behaviors mirroring the well-known negative coping mechanisms at the household level, but reflected at the societal level. Interviews go on to observe that Lebanon’s mode of resilience, prompted to a large extent by political stalemate and paralysis at the national level over the last decade, has resulted in, among other things, a further weakening of institutions and erosion of trust in central government. As a result, this reinforced confessionalism with concomitant increases in dependence, patronage and corruption to maintain the status quo. This dynamic led to increased gaps between the rich and the poor, as well as between Beirut, the periphery and remote areas, which experienced degradation of infrastructure and environment in the absence of policies and investment.

At the same time, there is a flight of capital and pervasive short-term orientation and irresponsibility of business, seeking only quick profits. Unemployment has created disillusionment and alienation of youth. There is also a continued marginalization of women, especially within the political sphere. While Lebanon demonstrated resilient characteristics, many of these are in fact negative coping mechanisms reinforced by the underlying system. Interviews consistently pointed to the role of confessional structures in reinforcing these dynamics and inequalities.

3.1.1 Understanding the Dynamics of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon

The Syrian crisis created a multi-dimensional shock to Lebanon. First and foremost, the demographic and social shock resulting from a massive influx of refugees created a strain on geographic space and access to resources. It also affected the economic sphere, both reducing Lebanon’s ability to export and import with and/or through Syrian markets that contributed to economic decline. There was also a political shock due to the further polarization of Lebanese politics in response to the crisis. More recently, security shocks due to the increasing spill-over of the conflict into Lebanon and the infiltration of various militant groups. Finally, there is the increasing risk of conflict between the displaced Syrians and Lebanese communities as a result of the demographic, economic, social service, natural resource, and security pressures due to the prolongation of the refugee situation and to their proportion to the Lebanese population.

Initially in 2011, 65% of Syrians felt “distinctly welcomed” by Lebanese families, yet the rapidly increasing scale of the influx throughout 2013-2014,⁴⁶ with the focus of the humanitarian response on refugees led to the perception that this is done to the detriment of poor Lebanese citizens, whose conditions worsened and who felt excluded from the response. Based on key informant interviews, one of the greatest articulated concerns from Lebanese was about economic manifestations of the crisis, such as displacement of Lebanese workers because of lower Syrian wages facilitated by the financial support they are getting, illegal businesses operated by Syrians at lower cost than Lebanese and displacing them, loss of business because of the closure of the Syrian border, loss of employment, and increased poverty. There are feelings of being displaced from access to social services and a drop in the quality of these services, pressures on local infrastructure and municipal services, and the perception of an increase in crime and violence, with incidents taken out of proportion and fanned by various interests. These have all led to a dramatic reversal in attitudes, with an emotionally driven backlash against Syrian refugees both at the popular and institutional levels, and the potential for social conflict.

45) Interview at Ministry of Interior and Municipalities 2014.

46) Mercy Corps, 2014c

Interviews at all levels in all areas revealed a remarkable consensus and depth of feeling about the displaced Syrians. Resentment is very high, fuelled by, among other things, the perception that many are not really refugees, but rather workers already used to Lebanon who brought their families, that the benefits given by the humanitarian response and its very effectiveness are attracting even more refugees to Lebanon, that refugees are better off than in their original places, and that humanitarian policies are encouraging reproduction. As one interviewee stated, “they [Syrian refugees] have become baby factories to take advantage of targeted benefits”.⁴⁷ Anecdotal stories are taken as general evidence, amplified and fanned by media and sectarian interests, with increasingly vocal calls for restrictions on Syrians, and an increasing number of arbitrary local and national actions, from curfews and citizen’s arrests, to forced evictions.

Most refugee youth interviewed express how much they felt hated and how they longed to get out of Lebanon by any means possible. One young Syrian boy commented, “They [Lebanese] hate us; they make us responsible for everything: if the phones don’t work—it is the Syrians; if there is no electricity, it is the Syrians; if there are traffic jams, it is the Syrians.”⁴⁸

This increasing risk of conflict has become a primary pre-occupation of the Lebanese government, civil society and the international community. There is a greater focus on mitigating threats to security and stability. The government has taken steps to close the borders thus limiting the flow of refugees and to regularize their situation, has begun enforcing rules on Syrian employment and business, has strengthened the security apparatus and linkages with security cells at the district level, has called for a shift of the humanitarian response to include affected Lebanese communities, and is playing a more active role in the direction of the humanitarian response. The perception of an “existential threat”⁴⁹ to Lebanon may have created some room for political consensus and action at the national level and provides an entry point for strengthening institutions. In particular, another spillover effect of the crisis has been a number of clashes along the Lebanon-Syria border that have generated greater insecurity inside Lebanon, consequently increasing citizens’ concerns about the country’s overall self-preservation and stability.

3.1.2 Evolving Crisis Dynamics

This research focuses on attempting to understand some effects of the crisis response to determine what strengthening positive resilience can mean in this context.

After 30 years of Syrian control in Lebanon and perceptions by Lebanese of Syrian intentions, the fact that the refugees are Syrian (and not any other nationality) is of great significance in Lebanon. The population movement triggered pre-existing pro and anti-Syrian regime sentiment in an already divided society and reinforced Lebanon’s split between the March 8 and March 14 movements.⁵⁰ Consequently, these dynamics further strengthened the political deadlock and reinforced the core vicious circle in the underlying system leading to further weakening of institutions, erosion of trust in government and reinforcement and hardening of sectarian divides and their attendant patronage mechanisms. At the same time, given the shared history, there is a portion of the Lebanese population that has always considered that Syrian citizens are different from the Syrian regime. While Lebanon’s territory was occupied by the Syrian army, marriages between civilians of both countries continued and many Lebanese have direct or extended families in Syria, including leaders of political parties. Nonetheless, the Syria crisis has hardened sectarian divides in Lebanon, much more than the refugees themselves. As stated before, refugees were initially well received in 2011, though tensions climbed when it became clear that their presence would not be short-lived and competition for jobs increased. Meanwhile, pressures on infrastructure and basic services exacerbated tensions even within the same religious communities.

The limited response at the central level until recently, in particular the political divisions about the initial

47) Interviews with Lebanon Mayors 2014.

48) Focus Group Discussion Baalbek 2014.

49) See for example Mudallali 2013, MTVLBN 2014, Daily Star 2014a, Daily Star 2014b.

50) Independent 2013.

issue of refugee camps, led to inaction, which resulted in refugees being distributed throughout a large number of communities and putting undue pressure on already crumbling local infrastructure and services, as well as health, education and social services.⁵¹

This also created considerable ecological degradation and natural resource pressures, namely the use of water and lack of sanitation systems. Municipalities and local NGOs were left on their own, causing many to turn to their sectarian patronage networks, thus strengthening the sectarian divide and its discourse and further weakening institutions and trust in central government. The decentralized response has also had the potential, however, to strengthen trust in local government, depending on perceptions of the nature of its response, especially when municipalities have been able to access funding for visible projects.

The stability of Lebanon's system, despite a high potential for conflict, can be explained partly by the strength of at least six characteristics related to:

1. Reliance on confessional networks because these offer a strong element of bonding and linking social capital, although kept vertical within confessions and political blocs with very little bridging across confessions;
2. Dependence on remittances. In Lebanon, this is expected to reach \$7.6 billion in 2014, the 18th largest recipient of remittances globally. This economic dynamic represents business interests, investments and expatriate workers;
3. A strong collective memory of past wars that helps mitigate violent rhetoric and aims to minimize the outbreak of violence and war to preserve social stability;
4. Strengthening of security forces in response to perceived threat of conflict that increases a perception of security and thus reduces fear;
5. Vigilance on fiscal and economic policy to maintain stable exchange rate; and
6. Range of engaged sub-national structures, like municipalities, that understand localized community dynamics and while they may lack the capacity, many are motivated to alleviate the conditions created by refugee crisis.

These capacities can help identify potential transformative entry points that can guide the current international response in close collaboration with Lebanese stakeholders to build resilience as the situation evolves.

3.2 Identifying Entry Points to Building Resilience

Identifying the most effective entry points to set transformational change in motion requires significant consultation and analysis. It was not possible in the context of this paper to bring diverse stakeholders together and have them identify effective transformative capacity to build resilience into this system, but for the sake of illustration, an examination of the system shows that:

National-level consensus building between political movements is futile due to polarized political identities that have created a deadlock that prevents significant decision-making, as demonstrated by the 20 attempts to select a president;

1. Confessionalism is influenced by fear and has a strong influence, so that anything that can reduce fear, in this case improvements in the quality of information available to people (which would avoid manipulation), a social discourse on alternatives that would also promote cooperation between groups and a sense of security, can have a disproportionate impact on the system. Social discourse is increasingly being advocated as a determinant of transformative social action;⁵²
2. Private sector investment can have an important influence on employment, equity, fiscal health,

51) Interview with Sami Atallah and El Mufti 2014.

52) Kalrberg 2012.

urbanization and environmental degradation, all of which are directly or indirectly potentially related to conflict.

3. Remittances and reliance on confessional networks and local government play a stabilizing role in addressing territorial and income equity, which is a main driver of urbanization and its potential for conflict;
4. Sub-national structures and networks including municipalities, health clinics, schools, Social Development Centers and other networks may lack essential capacity, but do offer a platform for greater engagement to strengthen participatory decision-making, address resource disparity and offer contextualized responses by region; and
5. International assistance to address crisis-induced needs, including increasing support to vulnerable Lebanese communities to mitigate resource-focused tensions.

From this analysis, the actions summarized in Box 3 are potential entry points that can trigger positive change processes and build transformative capacity within Lebanon. These involve key elements of a transformative action program towards a path of greater resilience building through socially equitable development. While these entry points may remain obscure and limited and may not progress much initially during the two-year duration of the LCRP, if they gather sufficient momentum, a shock, or a sequence of shocks may provide opportunities for accelerating such processes and help the system “tip into sustainability.”⁵³

BOX 3: POTENTIAL ENTRY POINTS FOR BUILDING TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY IN LEBANON

1. Act on the quality of information available to the public to promote objective documentation and portrayal of events;
2. Foster a discourse on alternatives including greater engagement and participation of women and youth to build social capital;
3. Stimulate private sector investment and responsibility;
4. Encourage innovative uses of remittances; and
5. Build on the strength of existing sub-national networks and local state institutions.

Under the LCRP, planning is beginning to delve into system strengthening for the first time, which demonstrates the international community and government’s intention to focus on building stronger institutions to address essential community needs. This effort can align with the country’s Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and with the Sustainability Development Goals into the future.⁵⁴ The international community is also increasingly taking steps to adjust its response to the evolving situation and to place the humanitarian response within the larger framework of Lebanese stabilization. Most of these lines of action have been identified at the OECD/UNDP-led workshop on stabilization systems analysis⁵⁵ and/or are incorporated in the design of the LCRP. All of this planning has facilitated a greater understanding of the context and identification of strategies to support stabilization and long-term resilience in Lebanon.

53) Westley 2011.

54) Lebanon Millennium Development Goals 2013-14. Lebanon is on track to achieve five of the eight MDGs by 2015; however work remains to be done on poverty reduction, gender, and the environment.

55) See OECD 2014a.

RECOMMENDATIONS



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on literature and practice, we know that resilience can emerge with the combination of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities. In the Lebanese context, as outlined in the LCRP, interventions must immediately address Lebanese and Syrian displaced communities' basic needs (Strategic Objective 1) while mitigating local conflict over resources and services (Strategic Objective 2) by building absorptive and adaptive capacity, while at the same time providing direct support to long-term planning and policy change to foster transformational change (Strategic Objective 3). In the context of the LCRP, stabilization is seen to mean strengthening national capacities to address long-term poverty and social tensions, while also meeting humanitarian needs. Its strategic direction was welcomed by the International Support Group to Lebanon at the Berlin Conference on the Syria Refugee Situation, in October 2014.⁵⁶

The Government of Lebanon's greater engagement to formulate the LCRP is also welcome, as it will help facilitate ownership of planning and implementation, and ultimately adoption of a transformational agenda. For the national government, the challenge is to take the opportunity of intense international attention, funding and expertise to move the crisis response toward national goals in a way that breaks away from the current stalemate and to welcome innovative approaches to deal with issues of governance and decision-making. Beyond just ownership, crucial activities for these recommendations to work, in Mercy Corps' experience, are identifying entry points at each level of the chain, finding champions who will commit to trying new ways and aligning incentives for change.⁵⁷

4.1 Subnational Structures and Network: Tangible Entry Points

One of the most promising entry points to build resilience within Lebanon, and ultimately to facilitate a transformational agenda, is through sub-national structures and networks. Rather than strengthening these structures as separate discrete actions, they can be seen as part of a coherent whole that contributes to the transformative agenda in Lebanon. This ranges from formal government structures to private sector networks, with a number of cross-cutting themes that should be integrated throughout.

The Lebanon Host Communities Support Program was launched in mid-2013 by UNDP jointly with the MOSA to ensure direct support was provided to the most vulnerable Lebanese communities as the Syrian refugee crisis unfolded. The program targets municipalities characterized by high levels of pre-crisis poverty, high concentrations of Syrian refugees and patterns of increased social tension. The overall objective is to promote social stability by mitigating the impact of the crisis on Lebanese communities, fostering participatory planning and constructively engaging the local authorities. At the local level, the main program counterparts are the municipal governments. Interventions are identified through a methodology called Map of Risks and Resources, which engages different stakeholders within the communities, and can be broadly grouped into three categories: 1) improving the delivery of basic services within the municipality or union of municipalities; 2) support for livelihoods and employment generation; 3) conflict prevention and peacebuilding. At the national level, a technical committee comprised of representatives of line ministries and donors reviews and approves the proposed interventions to ensure consistency with national strategies and avoid risks of duplication. To date, the Program has received over \$30 million in contributions from several donors, and has already supported over 200 projects throughout the country, benefiting over 300,000 people.

Many agencies in Lebanon are currently engaged in similar initiatives to engage host communities, however this work could be further enhanced to build greater resiliency. By no means exhaustive, this series of recommendation is one of multiple angles for resilience building to address immediate needs and tensions, while developing absorptive and adaptive capacities to enhance Lebanon's resilience and, ultimately, lay the groundwork for transformation. These recommendations are compatible and build upon the LCRP's Strategic Objectives 2 and 3, focused on strengthening local systems to improve service provision via local

56) UNDP 2014b.

57) See for example Mercy Corps 2011a and Mercy Corps 2011b.

institutions and networks, or as they are referred to below, as sub-national structures. While the goal of this work is to facilitate improved access to services (“the product”), within the resilience framework, there is a strong emphasis on the process (“the how”) to ensure that a transformational agenda is achieved using the characteristics outlined in Box 1.

4.2 GOVERNANCE via Municipalities and Unions

An essential element of the LCRP is converging resources to support service delivery by municipalities and social agencies.⁵⁸ It calls for coordination and collaboration within the international community, within the government, within civil society, within the private sector and among the four, at the national and sub-national levels. Data from Lebanon shows that the more positive one’s perception of local government performance, the less likely one’s propensity towards violence. This strong correlation suggests that if local governance capacity is strengthened, the incentive for Lebanese constituents to turn to violent strategies to advocate will likely diminish.⁵⁹

A major component is the empowerment of municipalities to take local actions to improve infrastructure and services, enforce rules and create collaborative action among community groups. It requires municipalities and Unions to create greater adaptive capacity as a bridge toward transformation. There is a range of options, from administrative and legal reform to practical programming, some of which are already occurring at a small scale, which will contribute to building the resilience of local government.

Originally stipulated in the 1989 Taif Accord, decentralization constitutes the one law that could transform the Government of Lebanon’s ability to respond to current and future shocks and stresses due to the law’s implications on a range of interconnected national problems, from the stagnation of the confessional system, to the disenfranchisement of youth, and the straining of social services. While not the end-all-be-all solution, decentralization offers a potential strategy for transforming Lebanon’s political system to facilitate more inclusive, contextualized participation in decision-making.

Decentralization has four main components:

- 1 Establish elected regional councils. Such a move will strengthen public participation in the political process, especially important for youth and help to mitigate the impact of political deadlock at the central government level;
- 2 Redraw local government boundaries because there is not only a disconnect between the boundaries of Unions of Municipalities and cazas, but about one third of municipalities are either not in the geographical boundaries of a Union of Municipalities, or due to political issues are not members;
- 3 Examine the mandates of municipalities and regional councils to ensure effectiveness of local government, specifically, moving responsibilities from municipalities to the regional councils because many municipalities have such low capacity – over a third of municipalities do not have a single full-time paid employee – that they cannot provide the array of social services they are currently mandated to;
- 4 Financial autonomy for municipalities and the regional councils, which will allow them to leverage taxes and utilise the proceeds without its distortion by the Independent Municipal Fund.

While steps were taken over the last three years to facilitate planning around decentralization, including the drafting of a proposed policy and structure,⁶⁰ the passing of the law remains elusive. It was introduced to the Council of Ministers in early 2014, though it has not moved forward. The decentralization project

58) UNDP 2014b.

59) Mercy Corps 2013c.

60) www.decentralization-lb.org

calls for, among other things, the creation of district or caza councils elected by municipalities and financial decentralization. The devolution of power would fundamentally change the current delicate confessional balance of power and the uncertainty of its outcome naturally generates fear. During this research, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities also identified the district level as the natural level for the development of a network of security cells and connected them closely to the central level.⁶¹ Therefore, in the short and medium-term, a number of programs can be implemented that would help to build the type of resilience that would foster greater decentralization. While decentralization remains unfulfilled, it potentially offers a more flexible and responsive governance structure closer to the people, and is in line with resilience principles. While there are many dynamics at play, decentralization and the proposed interventions below can help pave the way for greater local decision-making that enables transformational capacity under the resilience framework.

4.2.1 Provide Technical Support to Unions

After the July War of 2006, UN-Habitat established Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) in Unions of Municipalities to strengthen the role of the Unions, one governance structure up from municipalities, in providing support to municipalities, primarily around social service provision in semi-urban contexts. To ensure their ability to support municipalities in their full range of responsibilities, these RTOs are comprised of engineers, technicians and legal advisors who can undertake feasibility and technical studies and monitor the implementation of projects, which is especially vital in the case of infrastructure construction.

Mayors in participating municipalities report that using RTOs not only allows them to have consistent guidance, even allowing them to call upon more sophisticated systems such as Geographic Information System that were previously unavailable, but is actually more cost efficient than recruiting engineers on an ad-hoc basis for project. 75% of the Unions where UN Habitat established an RTO are being maintained.⁶² This is clearly a successful model that should be expanded; furthermore, the strengthening of the role of Unions of Municipalities corresponds to decentralization's focus on empowering local government. This model can be continued and expanded to provide necessary support to Unions to improve service delivery while increasing current response absorptive capacity. The experience of UN-Habitat is a good example to follow and can be further enhanced towards strengthening resilience.

4.2.2 Strengthen Municipal-Union Relations

While improving the capacity of Unions is vital, so is strengthening the relationships among municipalities, and between municipalities and the Unions. As mentioned above, many municipalities do not belong to a Union; therefore, Mercy Corps has been strengthening the linkages between local government institutions to create peer support networks. The advantages of such networks are two-fold. First, it allows for joint project planning, which is a distinct asset for implementing organizations as they target larger areas to achieve impact at scale, especially with social service projects. Second, in an environment where there are a multitude of actors funded by an array of donors and coordination among implementers is weak, municipalities can be effective in assisting each other. Mercy Corps is working with municipalities to increase their knowledge of both ministerial processes and procedures for social service project approval, as well as providing information about UN and NGO activities to allow municipalities to access external resources independently, inviting mayors to workshops after which they disseminate the information to peers in the area.

4.2.3 Reform Local Tax System

The financial autonomy for municipalities and Unions is a component of decentralization that can be implemented as an isolated financial reform law to the current structure of local government. To inform this thinking, a reference book in 2010 was published on financial reforms that are required for municipalities, and it includes 138 reforms in different laws and regulations. In summary, the main problems that should be addressed are four-fold:

61) Interview at Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, 2014.

62) UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat, 2015.

1. Municipalities are currently tasked with collecting at least 16 different types of taxes. Some of these are trivial and yield little returns, such as a tax on slaughtering animals for which municipalities can collect \$5 USD. Reform should focus on unifying the 16 taxes into a more manageable set – the poorest municipalities often have no full-time paid staff so they simply do not have the resources to allocate to monitoring or collecting taxes;
2. There is an argument to be made to have tax collection at a higher level, for example the Union of Municipalities. When municipal staff must collect the taxes from their communities, on a practical level it means that they simply do not do this because their communities are their friends and relatives. Distancing the tax collectors from the communities would help to overcome this;
3. Third, the most lucrative type of tax is on industrial and big scale commercial property. The poorest municipalities simply do not have industry/commerce in their boundary. If taxes were collected at a higher level they could be better allocated according to need;
4. Fourth, there are lucrative taxes that are not collected by the municipalities, specifically electricity and communications bills which are under the control of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Telecommunications. The proceeds from these taxes do not automatically reach the municipalities in a timely manner, further isolating the poorer areas of Lebanon from income they crucially need. The payment should be made directly to municipalities based on a regular and transparent mechanism.

By building municipalities' capacity to more effectively collect and manage taxes, it would enable them to increase their financial independence from the Independent Municipality Fund. The delay in disbursing the Fund and the irregularity of the payments are depriving municipalities of the timely and predictable funding needed to deliver services.⁶³ For instance, Mercy Corps implemented an assessment of municipal financial and operational capacity which probed a broad spectrum of issues, from financial management and administration, such as accounting systems or procurement processes that guarantee value-for-money, to softer skills, like citizen participation in strategic planning, or the use of media to publicize municipal responsiveness to citizen needs and concerns. The assessment identified a Property and Tax Mapping System as being the most strategic investment to assist one of Mercy Corps' target municipalities in North Lebanon. The impact of such a system comprises its two components: first, the property mapping will enable the municipality to assist its citizens with land disputes which are common due to the lack of regulation of land use and construction, and which often lead to violence; second, the tax mapping will improve the ability of the municipality to tax its citizens fairly and accurately, thereby increasing the capacity of the municipality to provide social services and resolve resource-based tensions.

With the appropriate technical support, coordination within the caza, and resources via tax collection, municipalities can take many different types of measures to respond to the need for improved services and infrastructure, while enhancing security and stability.⁶⁴

4.3 SOCIAL SERVICES via Health Clinics, Schools, and Social Development Centers

There is a range of sub-national systems that were critically strained under the Syria refugee crisis. These sub-national systems are key center points in the LCRP as mechanisms for community engagement. Under Strategic Objective 2, local institutions like health clinics, schools, and Social Development Centers are platforms for resilience programming because they provide key services to vulnerable localities, but also represent key social networks and relationships that can be strengthened for future shocks and stresses, and ultimately could be transformed to offer more equitable social welfare.

⁶³) Attallah, 2011.

⁶⁴) All mayors interviewed stated a willingness to help make this response more effective and deplored not being consulted about it.

4.3.1 Integrate Holistic Services via Public Health Clinics

In Lebanon, health services are characterized by a dominant private sector, which largely excludes many poor Lebanese and others who lack the financial means. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) is the last resort for poor patients and patients with no formal health insurance; however, it is very limited with hopes of expanding these important services. The primary health care system is greatly supported by non-governmental agencies and dependent on patient fees, and with the lack of regulation, services can vary in quality. Persons displaced from Syria and Lebanese alike are expected to cover the costs of consultations and diagnostics, which can be well beyond their means. A range of free services are provided through MoPH and UN agencies initially for Syrians and increasingly for Lebanese host populations. For instance, UNHCR and Medivisa are covering the majority of costs for refugees for emergency conditions and child delivery, but excludes chronic conditions. There is significant concern that the system is challenging to navigate. Secondary and tertiary care facilities offer around 13,000 hospital beds, though 85% are private sector.⁶⁵ The surplus of medical doctors and shortage of nurses and paramedical staff, leads to a very high cost for health services, both for persons displaced from Syria and for the Lebanese population.

Strategies to transform the health sector require immense collaboration across multiple actors. However, in the context of the LCRP, there is an opportunity to integrate more holistic care and other services into the current healthcare system. To do so, there is a tremendous need to build the capacity of MoPH to respond to the growing mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS) needs in the country. For instance, linking MOSA social workers to MoPH hospitals and public health clinics would bring together mental health, psychosocial support, case management, and other social services. People in need of regular healthcare are often facing other issues, and because everyone requires healthcare at some point in their lives, it is feasible to consider hospitals and public health clinics as focal points for information sharing and awareness, protection monitoring and addressing other protection issues. Women, children, and other vulnerable groups can often access healthcare and therefore may disclose domestic violence, or a healthcare provider may detect a survivor of abuse, torture, and/or trafficking. For example, there are international organizations that address violence as a public health epidemic, and use people from local communities to interrupt cycles of violence. One place they do this is in Emergency Rooms where they can assess and talk with survivors to mitigate against retaliatory violence and address conflicts that might exist, though this type of programming would require specific modalities that consider prevalent cultural norms. This transformational capacity building from response to mitigation can help address wider societal issues, and offer more holistic care to patients and people in need.

One model to consider, International Medical Corps is supporting a program within MoPH dedicated to assisting government strategies to integrate mental health into PHCs at a national level. This effort is supporting MoPH to compile, upgrade, and adapt its three-year mental health strategy by building MoPH's capacity for improved supervision, standardization and follow-up, as well as targeted training on psychological first aid and other MHPSS topics. In addition, International Medical Corps is providing case management services for Syrian refugees and other vulnerable communities in Lebanon. Case management teams are based in PHCs where social workers complete social assessments to determine the needs of the beneficiaries, make referrals, and involve other mental health staff as needed. Those in need of mental health care receive psychosocial support, brief intervention and continued follow-up using a community-based approach by adopting a bio-psychosocial model to recognize the community as a unit and to build on its collective strengths and shared resources to facilitate capacity building and create sustainability.

With support from the European Decentralized Cooperation, UNDP is implementing the project "Support to Integrated Service Provision at the Local Level" (known as 4M) using a resilience-based approach to tackle problems in the health, social and education sectors. The two-year project is initially planned to target 25 municipalities in Lebanon, including eight in Wadi Khaled, to support the development of integrated health territorial plans and services to increase access to high-quality primary health care services for vulnerable communities. It also seeks to increase awareness about health in public schools. The Project will work in

⁶⁵) World Bank, 2015.

close collaboration with the Ministries of Public Health, Education and Higher Education, Social Affairs, and Interior and Municipalities, as well as with the local authorities. It will promote dialogue among all involved stakeholders at the territorial level: representatives of line ministries and local authorities, directors of PHCs, directors of SDC, the health education team from the Ministry of Education with directors of public schools and other actors will discuss and set up integrated health territorial plans with the support of local and/or international experts. The aim is to involve all stakeholders in the local planning cycle and, at a later stage, to engage them in monitoring the interventions and evaluating their impacts. Activities will include capacity building of local authorities on planning and monitoring, upgrading of infrastructure and provision of equipment in schools and PHC, and strengthening of health educators' outreach and message delivery. In addition, a referral system mechanism will be initiated and set up between PHCs, SDCs, schools and secondary health care providers.

4.3.2 Expand Social Services via Public Schools

Similar to health, Lebanon's education sector is also highly privatized. Only 30% of all Lebanese children in school attend public school. The Syria refugee crisis increased the demand on public education by adding an additional approximately 110,000 children in 2014, which resulted in a scaling-up strategy that runs a first shift (morning classes) and second shift (afternoon classes) to accommodate the additional caseload. International and national actors provided support to over 229,000 children out of the approximately 600,000 in need.⁶⁶ The LCRP focuses on the most vulnerable populations, including registered Syrian and Palestinian refugees, as well as vulnerable Lebanese with a strong focus on school rehabilitation and enrollment.

To integrate resilience-building into this sector, schools should be part of this transformational capacity development. Schools offer a prime opportunity for community-based programming. By expanding their role as gateways for service delivery, schools can deepen community outreach mechanisms to foster greater self-support within school communities—especially given public schools are serving more vulnerable populations. As mentioned by the LCRP education section, there are a number of ongoing and planned initiatives that are mainstreamed under the education sector via school-based programming, including child protection, WASH, gender-based violence, livelihoods and social stability. These themes can be used to transform the education sector in Lebanon to enable schools to serve as community hubs and link them to broader change. For instance, a focus on adolescent girls could be linked to building greater leadership potential, cultivating a new generation of women leaders to participate in local governance. Another strategy may be to link public schools to vocational training centers (see section below) to create an intentional pipeline of students to skills-based development that is linked to greater workforce employability. Where they do not already exist, Parent-Teacher Associations could be created with Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian families to develop disaster risk reduction plans for each school, enabling community members to adapt and absorb future shocks. This platform could be expanded to create wider community-level discussions about resource mapping and how schools play a central role to organize and facilitate support. These three ideas could enable schools to serve as a platform for adapting, absorbing and transforming capacity to build greater resilience within vulnerable communities in Lebanon.

4.3.3 Deepen Social Welfare Services via Social Development Centers

In Lebanon, the Council of Ministers has assigned the leading role for emergency coordination to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). An existing community-based network of 222 Social Development Centres (SDCs) affiliated with MOSA was mandated as the central point for provision of social and economic development services. In line with protection sector plans under the LCRP, SDCs have been identified as the primary entry points to build resilience within communities in order to mitigate the impact of the crisis on vulnerable groups, including children and women – vis-a-vis immediate response, early recovery and longer term development. This will require significant cooperation between multiple agencies to invest strategically in SDC sub-national structures—in alignment with national institutional strengthening—and local actors, as a more cost-efficient approach that will advance coping, recovering and transforming resilience-based strategies. To date, both UNICEF and UNHCR have provided support to MOSA to ensure a harmonized approach.

66) LCRP, 2015.

It will also take a gradual approach to ensure SDCs are not consumed with the capacity development. One gradual approach has been undertaken by UNICEF and three implementing partners—InterSoS, Terre de Hommes-Italy, and Mercy Corps—to distribute 120,000 clothing vouchers in winter-affected areas for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian children. The identification of these children is based on MOSA’s National Poverty Targeting Program and UNHCR refugee registration. SDC directors were trained on tablet-based database and assessment tools, community mobilization and distribution, improving their capacity in the long-term. SDCs will lead the distribution, while international organizations will facilitate the backend of the distribution with the local clothing vendors. This is a gradual step forward to position SDCs as center points for greater social welfare to both Syrians and Lebanese, and over time, a center point for UNICEF programming, to be provided with additional training and support on child protection, health care, and information dissemination as a multi-year effort to expand SDC capacity.

4.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT via Market Facilitation

Within the LCRP, the livelihoods sector aims to create employment based on the *Making Markets Work for the Poor* (M4P) approach. This is a positive direction seeing M4P as a systems approach that can build pro-poor resilience if implemented using a resilience lens. Market facilitation approaches in general, and M4P in particular, are based on the recognition that the lives of the poor are strongly affected by the structure of the market systems they belong to. Intervening in specific product value chains without addressing the underlying dynamics of the market systems that keep the poor economically marginalized are unlikely to succeed or to have large scale or sustainable impacts. In light of this understanding, the M4P approach strives to understand the reasons that markets do not work for the poor and then to facilitate structural changes to the system that will have sustainable and large-scale impact and create social and economic equity.

The facilitation approach to program implementation aims to strengthen the ability of market players to participate effectively in the system, correct distorted incentives and foster the adoption of new ways of doing things and the emergence of new or strengthened positive relationships among players in the system. In such an approach, the program avoids providing services or taking a direct role in or becoming a part of the system – because direct involvement would undermine the local components of the system and necessarily be unsustainable – and adapts its intervention rapidly in the light of new understanding, changing conditions or emerging trends. The facilitation approach is also critical to building resilience⁶⁷ and there are several strategies to consider under this sector. It is important to cite that that the meaningful involvement of women and youth by actively promoting skills training, employment and entrepreneurship to increase economic opportunities is essential to building wider community resilience.

4.4.1 Deepen Vocational Training via Private Sector Linkages

According to the Ministry of Economy and Trade, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the key to employment growth in the Lebanese economy. Currently, SME’s employ 51% of the Lebanese workforce, below the 68% average found in developed economies. Despite the high level of education in Lebanon, 55% of prospective employers cite an inadequately educated workforce as a major constraint to growth and further hiring. The Ministry of Economy and Trade partly attributes this to the relatively under-developed vocational education system and lack of links between businesses and vocational education.

The Vocational Training and Education (VTE) sector faces several challenges. For example, a dual systems approach of combining learning and on-the-job training to facilitate a transition into the labor market is very limited in Lebanon. Despite a small number of limited initiatives, relationships with businesses are practically nonexistent. Secondly, much of the VTE is provided by NGOs on a sub-contracting basis, offering short-term courses, but without any mechanisms to ensure the quality of the courses or offering a nationally recognized certificate. Thirdly, the VTE’s relevance proves problematic, as those enrolled in public vocational training receive very limited and outdated competencies and practical experience. Lastly, no official strategy exists for VTE, and it seems to function separately from other components of the education system.⁶⁸ By deepening these links between private sector and vocational training entities, there can be a transformational shift that

67) Mercy Corps 2013a.

68) Youth Unemployment Policy Paper, International Labor Organization, 2013.

facilitates improved matching between skills and business needs, creating a mutual benefit to both entities.

One strategy would be to take a value chain approach to workforce development by identifying organizations involved in the supply chain of a well-established product or service, and then identify process inefficiencies resulting in workforce skill deficiencies. By starting at the top with a successful company that offers a profitable service or product and working down the supply chain, the likelihood of building appropriate skills and creating sustainable employment increases. For example, by tracing supply chains of well-established manufacturers like INDEVCO in Jbeil or Jubali Brothers in Saida, real labor skills gaps that affect profitability and productivity are identified and appropriate training programs developed. Another example, privatized health care is a thriving and highly-profitable sector throughout the country. However, many health centers struggle with adequate skills in administration and operations. This activity will focus on developing administration and operation workforce skills for health-sector organizations outside of Beirut, such as rural primary health care centers and hospitals. By improving administrative services, area residents will not necessarily need to travel to Beirut to receive efficient and quality care, incentivizing rural health care centers to hire skilled health administrators.

4.4.2 Create Workforce Linkages via Chambers of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce can help find new way of approaching employment creation in target areas and in planning actions, organizing productive work campaigns that link to the youth movement and changing business models. Interviews with Lebanese business owners and the Chamber of Commerce in Bekaa revealed willingness to engage in these types of activities and that the potential for such transformational change exists.⁶⁹ Lebanese business is very dynamic and entrepreneurship is a key strength of Lebanese society. Engaging business in the humanitarian response this way, with a view on the longer-term fundamental change in attitudes, is another example of aligning the response for transformation. The Chambers of Commerce should be included in projects targeting a) Business Development Services including business associations; b) Lebanon's regulatory framework/business enabling environment, primarily for small-medium enterprise development (SME); and c) policies, systems, and capacity related to trade and exports, including workforce development, technology, and innovation.

4.4.3 Promote Innovative Technology Investment via Lowering Financial Risk

Lowering financial risk is key to incentivizing investment and spurring economic growth. In Lebanon, businesses are less willing to invest in the longer term due perceived instability.⁷⁰ Providing a basket of small grants, specialized technical assistance, coaching and mentoring to innovative small-medium SMEs and social enterprises would encourage these organizations to seize opportunities. The philosophy behind the small grants method is to provide constructive feedback to every submitted concept note to facilitate and encourage critical thinking and help beneficiaries understand deficiencies in their proposed logic for short-term investment, allowing the private sector to expand and employ additional workforce.

A transformational change would be making technology visible and accessible to rural communities to improve efficiency and environmental protection. A key pillar is a public outreach program in collaboration with private sector partners to highlight and demonstrate commonly-available technology, including solar power for homes and agricultural operations, food waste re-use initiatives and water management devices. This will be done through partnerships with relevant private sector actors, including social enterprises, to develop technology demonstration sites, innovation field days and school competitions. For example, leveraging the existing structure, knowledge and experience of entrepreneurial and technology incubators such as Berytech and Alt City to work in rural communities can have a dramatic impact in the short to medium term, as the mechanism for action already exists.

69) Interview with Vice-President, Chamber of Commerce Beqaa. This perspective is shared by two interviewed mayors who are also business owners.

70) Mercy Corps, 2015.

Currently, a green energy loan (NEERA) is available in Lebanon through commercial banks. However, banks lack the willingness to engage the agricultural sector due to credit risks and low loan amounts relative to other sectors. Applicants are also required to pay for an initial technical study to initiate the process, taking at least six months for approval resulting in significant financial risk for agricultural producers. The use of NEERA for agricultural clean energy solutions is currently negligible. More flexible conditions are required to minimize the time and burden in accessing capital. A program that includes comprehensive technical assistance to loan recipients, and leverages current programming, would be able to pro-actively engage producers and SMEs to better find and apply clean energy solutions.

4.4.4 Promote Entrepreneurial Ecosystems via Fiscal Policy Changes

Lebanon is a country with exceptional human capital. Unfortunately, economic policies do little to support this extraordinary quality. Many great minds and talents are lost through migration to the Gulf, Europe and North America. Reversing this drain is the key to resilience and economic prosperity for Lebanon. Instituting policies that support an entrepreneurial ecosystem and a rural economy that creates jobs, not just individual wealth, will enable greater resilience. This can be done through a policy of public sector reform and decentralization (see above) and economic development and growth by increasing productivity and efficiency.

These policy reforms need to address the crumbling roads and bridges that limit market access, especially for rural communities, inadequate telecommunications infrastructure and an electricity system that can barely meet half of the country's total demand. A shift in spending away from Electricité Du Liban (EdL) subsidies into capital and social expenditure would support sustainable and inclusive growth. The EdL currently generates electricity at a loss; its production does not cover demand, which is ultimately met through expensive private generators. Plans to strengthen generation capacity, switch to natural gas and increase electricity tariffs should be implemented without further delay, and complemented by improvements in transmission and distribution. Current subsidies to EDL are around \$2.1 billion limiting capital; spending is inadequate to address infrastructure needs. Similarly, social safety nets and government support for the poor are insufficient. Targeted social spending, including through the National Poverty Targeting Program, would build resilience in vulnerable communities

Agriculture development is a key sector to strengthen resilience and spur economic growth, yet the Lebanese government devotes less than one percent of its budget to support agriculture. Investments in infrastructure, food safety, skills training, value chain development and technology transfer would boost this sector significantly. Promoting the use of drip irrigation and surface water collection would improve the water situation tremendously.

Improvements in fiscal management should complement the proposed measures. There is scope to broaden tax bases, particularly for the VAT and income taxes, strengthen revenue administration and reduce tax evasion. Also, the development of prospective gas resources should not be delayed. These represent an asset of the whole country, which should be managed in a transparent, sustainable and equitable way. It is necessary for authorities to cooperate across institutions to define a sequenced strategy in this area, starting from the formulation of a transparent fiscal regime with taxation that ensures a fair share for the government and smart investments promoting sustainable, environmentally-sound activities.⁷¹

Improving competitiveness will unlock Lebanon's growth potential including, as discussed above, taking an M4P approach that encourages "crowding in." Lowering the cost of doing business, improving the business environment and increasing productivity (including in the public sector) could boost competitiveness and make exports and import-competing sectors a stronger engine of growth, to ultimately facilitate transformational resilience.

These types of interventions can facilitate greater resilience-building within communities and the private sector to create mutually beneficial services and good access and responsiveness. Integrating market facilitation into

71) IMF, 2014.

programming activities can enable existing constraints and gaps within the value chain to be identified and mitigated as a step towards sustainability.

4.5 INFORMATION AND COORDINATION via Civil Society Networks

Lebanon has a vibrant network of civil society organizations with a deep understanding of the structures and systems at the local level. Out of this Syria refugee response, new non-governmental organizations were established to fill critical gaps, many by young men and women motivated to become more engaged and provide necessary support to vulnerable communities. Not new to Lebanon, this civil society mobilization also occurred during the July 2006 War, and served an essential role in providing key services well beyond the humanitarian response. That previous crisis created some additional absorptive and adaptive capacities that continue today, though much more can be done to facilitate greater transformational capacity.

4.5.1 Strengthen Existing and Build New Coordination Capacity via District Level

According to the Lebanon Support Network, a national umbrella organization, based on the July 2006 War, a series of thematic working groups were established at the district level. Local NGOs and community-based organizations convened to coordinate assistance. Unfortunately, these thematic groups were not engaged as part of the Syria refugee crisis. They were encouraged to participate in the UN working group system, however, the language barrier, as meetings were predominately in English, and the centralization of meetings to one major city per region, i.e. Zahle, Tripoli, or Tyr made this coordination challenging for them to access. Moving forward, regional and thematic civil society networks should be created using national and sub-national organizations. It is possible to position local networks and organizations to lead elements of the crisis response where capacity exists, and provide technical support to develop capacity where local NGOs and networks have willingness but not the capacity to lead response efforts.

For example, the NGOs Platform of Saida (NPS), an association of about 56 governmental and non-governmental agencies, was established in the mid-eighties in response to repeated emergencies in South Lebanon. The alliance seeks to promote social justice, coexistence and citizenship within the Sidon society, through peacebuilding and advocating for social, political, economic and cultural rights; empowering local civil society organizations; building partnerships with the public and private sectors and responding to emergencies that might affect the city of Saida and its surroundings. NPS is embedded in the municipality of Saida and has become an indispensable part of its response, because it has a well-developed emergency response strategy, which includes both natural and social emergencies, and is a good example of well-developed absorptive capacity.⁷²

4.5.2 Enhance Thematic Civil Society Networks

Up to this point, institutional support from the UN has centered on the Ministries and, to some extent, the Municipalities.⁷³ Focusing on district-level organizations can enable more local organizations to coordinate and address contextual needs. For instance, Mercy Corps and Heartland Alliance are piloting “caza level committees” for protection-related service providers and advocacy groups related to gender-based violence and mental health in South Lebanon. Related and motivated stakeholders are convened on a monthly basis, and based on their agreed terms of reference, they are strengthening the local referral pathways to create a more sustained mechanism for services, instead of depending on international organizations that are most likely to leave the area based on availability of funding. With this district-level coordination, civil society networks can more effectively build around the actual capacity available, and work to fill gaps. This is a more contextualized approach, and could strengthen the linkages between the district and union and municipalities, in order to ensure information related to services is available.

72) [NPS 2012a], [NPS 2012b].

73) Interview with UNHCR official 2014.

In terms of learning from the current crisis to strengthen resilience to future crises, another challenge is to strengthen the current disaster risk reduction infrastructure and expand its social and conflict dimension with measures for mitigation, prevention, early warning, careful monitoring and rapid response, with standard operating procedures. This has been done, for example, in the Saida NGO Platform emergency plan.⁷⁴ A coalition of NGOs in each geographical area, closely integrated into the government's disaster risk reduction infrastructure would go a long way towards dealing with the risk of internal conflict.

4.6 Cross Cutting Areas to Foster Resilience

4.6.1 Youth-at-Risk

The LCRP has a strong focus on youth issues, which is a key entry point to transformation. In focus group discussions conducted to inform this research, youth demonstrated a great interest and commitment to service.⁷⁵ When young people are able to contribute to their communities and participate in decisions that affect their lives, they gain confidence and status and also improve their relationships with peers and adults. In transitional states, community participation can also help young people experience positive feelings—that they are righting an injustice or protecting communities that have suffered in the past.⁷⁶ However, for too long youth engagement programs have been characterized by training youth in leadership development and advocacy, and providing youth groups with grants to conduct community projects. Little attention and effort has focused beyond the supply of trained and engaged youth to build lasting demand for engaged and skilled youth among community leaders and civil society. Organizations should aim to work on both the supply and demand side of youth engagement to avoid one-off engagement opportunities for youth that may increase satisfaction in the short-term but risk exacerbating frustrations in the long-term. For instance, doing community-service projects with youth to identify challenges and connect them with local power structures to develop solutions that engage them, through a process of program planning and design, building community support, fundraising, implementation and evaluation. Rather than seeing them as vulnerable recipients of intervention, they must be seen as change agents and assisted to plan and implement a large number of cross-sectarian service, sports and cultural activities with opportunities for social discourse and dialogue.⁷⁷

Within these activities, there should be a clear intention to bring Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian girls and boys together to educate one another about the similarities and differences in their cultures. More importantly, integration of skills around cooperation/collaboration, teamwork and trust are essential, and should be integrated in all children, adolescent and youth programming. Economic opportunities are key to building youth inclusion and self-confidence. A well-designed cash-for-work program targeted to youth-at-risk in urban and semi-urban areas, as called for by the social stability sector in the LCRP, can easily be expanded to include the value changes mentioned above. Municipalities need a large number of volunteer actions at the community level and are prepared to manage them. For instance, the National Federation of Scouts in Lebanon are well positioned to play a leadership role given they are one of the most far-reaching entities in the country engaging youth.

4.6.2 Gender Integration and Women's Participation in Decision-making

Gender must be cross-cutting across all interventions, with the needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of women, men, girls and boys considered separately in each activity.⁷⁸ Gender is mentioned in the LCRP in the context of protection and gender mainstreaming. While the addition of gender mainstreaming is welcome, the focus of gender interventions has so far been on gender-based violence and other protection issues.⁷⁹ The gender dimension could be strengthened to enhance its transformative potential and build resilience.

74) NPS 2012b.

75) Focus Group Discussions, Baalbeck, 2014.

76) World Bank, 2007.

77) For more information, see Mercy Corps' September 2014 Advancing Adolescence assessment in Lebanon and Jordan: <http://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/advancing-adolescence>.

78) Mercy Corps' Gender and Resilience Theory of Change lays out the logic of from a gender-integrated approach, to increased access to and control of capitals, to empowerment, to inclusion, and, finally, to resilience.

79) Interviews with Abaad and Kafa organizations 2014.

The link between women’s empowerment, bridging social capital and reducing the strength of sectarian divides is increasingly supported by literature that argues that bridging social capital has powerful potential to heal and unite societies and build social relationships horizontally – across sectarian divides – rather than vertically through sectarian command chains. Women’s different roles in society often offer them the opportunity to serve as connectors across divides. Gender-balanced representation in local decision-making processes can provide a springboard for greater overall women’s empowerment and influence in broader political processes.⁸⁰ Interviews with NGO staff in Baalbek revealed that the potential of women as a social cohesion resource to decrease tensions across divides in Lebanese society and among hosting and displaced communities has been underutilized. Analyses of gender and resilience find that in addition to engaging women and men equally in response activities, there is a strong need for transformative approaches that can “fundamentally alter the balance of power in gender relations as post-conflict societies rebuild.”⁸¹

Unfortunately, women’s participation in decision-making is one of three major MDG weaknesses in Lebanon. There should be a greater emphasis on increasing the role of women in decision-making in formal government at both the national and municipality levels. There is currently a MOSA-led initiative funded by the Italian Embassy in Beirut, which aims to reduce social exclusion of the most vulnerable groups of Lebanese society through the pursuit of gender equality. MOSA is striving to address the under-representation of women in the decision-making spheres in Lebanon through a series of well-planned and thoroughly implemented activities. The project has gained significant visibility since 2013 and it was able to achieve a series of major milestones including networking, coordinating and building successful partnerships with the main stakeholders working on women’s issues in Lebanon. They organized pioneering national events, including the “Women in Parliament” event that opened the doors of the parliament, for the first time in Lebanon, to around 200 politically active women to present and discuss priority social issues with the Speaker of the House. They are also creating an enabling environment at MOSA for gender mainstreaming and acting as a role-model for other governmental institutions, as well as creating linkages between women from the various Lebanese political parties and assisting them to achieve a common vision concerning the need to increase women’s participation in decision-making spheres. There is significant potential to spread this work to the municipality level, especially in light of greater decentralization efforts to expand women’s participation and ultimately increase resilience.⁸²

Simultaneously, it is necessary to engage women in economic opportunities that will foster greater self-reliance and fiscal independence. Under the LCRP, there are a number of initiatives focused on women’s empowerment and this should continue to be expanded. Across Lebanon, there are already a range of women’s cooperatives that are well positioned to be linked into greater market opportunities, including food processing and agriculture—both small but strong industries in Bekaa.

80) See Mercy Corps 2014b.

81) See for example Bouta 2005.

82) MOSA 2014.

CONCLUSION



5. CONCLUSION

This paper set out to answer the following questions:

1. What does resilience mean in the context of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon?
2. How does a resilience framework apply to the response to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon?
3. What programmatic interventions would most effectively build resilience?

An examination of the literature on resilience, and particularly of resilience in politically-induced conflict settings, as well as field work in Lebanon all point to the importance of building absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities as the interplay between stabilization and resilience. Stabilization is essential to prevent a situation from deteriorating; transformation is needed to address the root causes of instability and conflict. Neither of these can hope to achieve resilience alone and both must go hand in hand and reinforce each other.

The analysis also points to the fact that while resilience is often perceived as distant goal, difficult to achieve or to focus on in the midst of a conflict, the crisis offers opportunities to work toward transformation that must be seized. Resilience-building capacities can and should be addressed simultaneously with the emergency response.

The foregoing analysis shows that it is possible to “*embed*” a resilience-focused response within an evolving emergency response, provided sufficient time and effort is taken to attempt to understand the dynamics of the underlying system and identify key entry points that can help guide and align the humanitarian response towards transformation to build positive resilience. The LCRP is a progressive step forward to create an integrated strategy that will facilitate absorptive and adaptive capacity development in Lebanon, and there is still room to identify and inform the transformational agenda. Transformation need not be perceived as novel; it can be systematic and iterative. In politically-induced conflicts, this can be put into motion earlier to facilitate broader systematic change.

In terms of resilience framework in such contexts, rather than trying to fit resilience-building activities artificially in a fixed framework, resilience thinking should instead be considered a process that includes the following steps:

1. Understand the vulnerabilities and dynamics of the underlying systems and the people living within them;
2. Identify capacities and entry points for building resilience;
3. Understand the shocks and stresses contributing to crisis dynamics at multiple scales (including the effects of initial response);
4. Identify the required humanitarian responses to the crisis dynamics;
5. Modify these responses to align them to the resilience entry points and thus leverage their transformative effects.

It was also found that it is not necessary to fully understand the complexity of the system at hand before acting on it, nor is it necessarily productive to invest inordinate time and resources in externally conducted analyses in order to determine the optimal interventions. With the understanding that the most appropriate solutions will “emerge” naturally if the conditions for their emergence are fostered and if intervention is conceived as a rapid succession of short cycles, carefully monitored, analyzed and learned from to inform the design of the next cycle, ultimately interventions can inform a larger learning process to enable adaptive design and management. This requires openness towards innovation, experimentation and learning, and therefore towards the possibility of failure, which should not be seen as such but as a learning opportunity, an acceptance and embracing of risk and uncertainty, placing the action at the interface between “order and chaos,”⁸³ between local government and the people, and empowering them to arrive at a variety of non-replicable context-based solutions by delegating decision-making and allocating resources at that level.

83) Ramalingam 2008.

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Appendix A: List of Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Ziyad Baroud	Founding partner at Haddad Baroud Daher -Tria Law Firm (HBD-T) – former Minister of Interior
Balal Al Youbi	Chemonics Lebanon Support Program, funded by Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)
Rhonda Gossen	Senior Humanitarian/Development Advisor, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Lebanon
Sami Atallah	Director, Lebanese Center for Policy Studies
Gabriel Bayram	Livelihood Consultant, Mercy Corps
Synne Bergby	Programme Planning Advisor, UN-Habitat
Ziyad Qamar	Head Donor relations and projects support office, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
Agust Flygenring	Advisor, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
Ninette Kelley	Country Representative, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Lebanon
General Pierre Salem	Advisor to the Minister of Interior and Municipalities & Head of the Syrian Refugees Security Cell
Luca Renda	County Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Lebanon
Ramzi Neman	Social Protection Specialist, Human Development, Middle East and North Africa, World Bank (personal capacity)
Ross Mountain	United Nations, Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator
Gianluca Buono	Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator, The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
Hryar Wanniss	M&E officer, The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
Lama Naja	Emergency Response Program Coordinator - ABAAD (Dimensions)
Saja Michael	Emergency Response Program Officer - ABAAD (Dimensions)
Maria Semaan	Director, KAFA (enough)
Abdul Majid Rafihi	Senior Contingency Planning Advisor, Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA)
Nabil Tabbal	Advisor to the Minister of Social Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA)
Focus Group Discussion: Lebanon International Humanitarian Forum (LIHF)	Amy Keith: Coordinator LIHF, Oxfam, World Vision (2), Save the Children, International Medical Corps (IMC), Premiere Agence - Aide Medical Internationale (PUAMI), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Mercy Corps
Bruno Minjauw	Resilience and Liaison Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Heba Hagefelder	Director of Cooperation - The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Amanda McLoughlin	Development Advisor, British Embassy
Mounir Teeny	Vice-President, Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Zahle and the Bekaa
Hoda Sayyed	Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) head Balbeck
Walid Assaf	DARI Head and Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) Head Baalbeck
Dr. Sabrine	Social Development Center (SDC) Head Baalbeck
Beitokom Staff	Beitokom, NGO Baalbeck
Khalil Al-Chehimi	Mayor of Saadawaye, Bekaa
Dr. Dargham Elias Touma	Mayor of Qab Elias
Mohamad Abdul Sater	Director, Beitokom
Focus Group Discussion: Youth in Baalbek	At Beitokom
Ghassam Wehbe	Area Manager, Mercy Corps, Bekaa
Mrs. Iman Rafi	Qaim Maqam, Zgharta Kaza
Mohammad Saadiyeh	President, Dannieh Municipality Union, Northern Governorate
Majid Hamatto	General Coordinator, NGO Platform of Saida
Ali Matar	President, Union of Zaharani municipalities
Dr. Hasan Fakih	Deputy Governor, Nabatiye
Mrs. Mouzayane Siklaoui Ajami	President of Lebanese Red Cross, Tyre Branch
Brett Hanley	Programme Officer, World Food Programme (WFP)



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For More Information

United Nations Development Programme
Arab African International Bank Bldg
Banks Street
Nejmeh, Beirut 2011 5211
Lebanon
E-mail: registry@undp.org.lb
Website: www.lb.undp.org

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