



**The Syrian displacement crisis and a  
Regional Development and Protection Programme:  
Mapping and meta-analysis of existing studies of costs, impacts and  
protection**

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**Study team**

**Roger Zetter, Emeritus Professor, Refugee Studies Centre, University of  
Oxford – Team Leader**

**Héloïse Ruaudel – Policy Analyst and Project Management**

**Sarah Deardorff-Miller – Research Assistant**

**Eveliina Lyytinen - Research Assistant**

**Cameron Thibos - Research Assistant**

**Finn Skadkær Pedersen – Senior Consultant and Partner,  
Tana Copenhagen, Aps**

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### DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Governments of Denmark, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq, or the European Union

## Acronyms

FTI	Fast Track Interventions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoJ	Government of Jordan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
JD	Jordanian Dinar
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFI	Non-food items
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KR-I	Kurdistan Region Iraq
PRS	Palestine refugees from Syria
QIP	Quick Impact Project
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
RDPP	Regional Development and Protection Programme
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SRRP6	Syrian regional response Plan 6 (1014)
SHARP	Syrian Humanitarian Action Plan

## Executive Summary

### 1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in 2011, almost 2.4 million people had fled Syria by January 2014. The prospect of protracted refugee displacement accentuates the already severe negative social, economic and developmental impacts.

The sixth inter-agency Syria Regional Response Plan (RPP6), approved in November 2013, appealed for US\$ 4.2 billion for the 2014 humanitarian and developmental programme for the refugees and their host communities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Within this context, the European Union has prepared a three year Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq covering two programme areas - costs and impacts of displacement on refugees and host countries and protection needs of the refugees.

This report, provides a *mapping and meta-analysis* of 163 reports produced since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013. It presents a systematic assessment of these studies and a triangulated evidence-base from which to launch the RDPP, detailed in a programme of Fast Track Interventions (Section 5).

### 2. General regional and country overview

In a region already hosting millions of Palestine and Iraqi refugees, the unprecedented scale of the Syrian crisis is producing immense additional strains on the resources and capacities of neighbouring governments and the international humanitarian system. In RPP6, assistance is targeted at 2.5 million host population, in the three RDPP countries, comparable with a projected target population of 2.85 million Syrian refugees.

RPP6 provides an increased focus on early recovery, social cohesion interventions and a transition from assistance to development-led interventions. Many of the key priorities of the RPP6 are relevant to the RDPP.

None of the three countries is signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention or the 1967 Protocol yet they have displayed remarkable solidarity towards the refugee population, although some reports indicate an increasingly 'ambivalent hospitality' amongst the host populations.

The vast majority of the refugees live in the community, exclusively so in Lebanon; about 20% of refugees are encamped in Jordan and 40% in Iraq.

### 3. Analysis of cost, impacts and socio-economic status of refugees and host communities

#### 3.1. Economic impacts on refugees and their livelihoods

The meta-analysis reveals that: income generation activities are scarce and that in most refugee households the *income-expenditure gap* is substantial and increasing; livelihood sustainability, cost of living and rent, alongside food security and increasing indebtedness are major concerns for the refugees (and for the hosts); household vulnerability is increasing.

Syrian refugees find casual and irregular work, predominantly in unskilled formal and informal sectors: about 30% of the working age population are in paid, sporadic, employment. Wage levels are declining with increasing competition for work.

Heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance, the refugees also deploy a variety of increasingly risky *coping strategies* amongst which the sale of personal assets is extensive. Indebtedness is both

widespread and increasing, accelerating the impoverishment and vulnerability of the refugee households and their dependency on assistance.

The **urbanisation** of the majority of refugees is a significant factor in their livelihood situation. Although they are more able to engage in economic activity than encamped refugees, the opportunities are limited and their vulnerability is no less severe.

There are specific **vulnerabilities of women and children** resulting from the changing labour dynamics and livelihood strategies of the refugees. The rising incidence of child labour, as refugee households succumb to increasing impoverishment, is of particular concern.

**Refugee registration** is an important determinant of livelihood conditions, giving access to humanitarian assistance and some public services. Jordan and Lebanon do not permit registration for the right to work. In KR-I residency rights for refugees permits the right to work.

For **Palestine and Iraqi refugees**, (secondarily displaced from Syria), the costs and impacts of displacement and their livelihood situation are especially problematic.

**Conclusions:** the livelihood conditions of the Syrian refugees are chronic and vulnerability is both deepening and becoming more entrenched. In this context the RDPP will be instrumental in promoting development-led strategies which can generate employment for refugees (and hosts).

### **3.2. Macro and micro impacts on host countries and populations**

The overall economic impact of the Syrian refugee crisis is negative, widespread and severe. These conditions, alongside capacity-stressed public services, are significantly diminishing the living standards and livelihood conditions for the host populations.

#### ***The micro-economic impacts***

The crisis has had a very detrimental impact on all the **public services**. Substantial capacity shortfalls impact the daily lives of the host population and also affect economic production and output. **Housing rent levels** are rising steeply, pricing locals out of the market. Despite restrictions on the refugees' right to work, they gain employment and the surge in labour supply has deeply affected **labour markets**. Substantial spikes in unemployment, depressed wage rates and limited employment opportunities, mainly for low-skilled labour, are widespread. **Market prices** for basic commodities and food have increased. Cash transfers/vouchers to assist refugees, enhance their purchasing power in local markets, thereby accentuating the livelihood vulnerability of an increasingly large number of local households. In Jordan, removal of subsidies on basic services and foodstuffs (under structural readjustment conditions), has added pressure on household budgets.

These factors are having a **severely detrimental impact on household livelihoods**, pushing a very substantial number of (mainly, low income and already poor), households into impoverishment.

#### ***Fiscal and Macro-economic impacts***

Negative **macro-economic** impacts entail large losses in terms of economic performance, public revenue and taxes, profits, private consumption and investment, cuts in GDP growth increasing unemployment and widening the national deficits.

There is severe disruption to **regional trading patterns and dynamics** impacting import and export performance and commodity prices for consumers. There is no evidence, as yet, of substitution effects in the neighbouring economies replacing lost Syrian output. The long term dislocation of international trade will further exacerbate declining investment, rising unemployment and commodity shortages. Less tangible negative impacts on the domestic economies stem from the **unstable political and security situation** and spill over effects generated by the conflict. These

reduce investor and consumer confidence, further diminishing economic activity and placing public finances under increasing pressure.

Short-term **development opportunity** effects are evident: increased availability of cheap labour; rising demand and consumption from refugees; benefits for large-scale agricultural producers, landlords, local traders, businesses and retailers, construction contractors, suppliers of goods and commodities to the humanitarian programme. In some locations educated refugee professionals such as engineers, doctors, skilled construction and craft workers have augmented local economic capacity.

**Conclusions:** The micro-economic impacts place increasing pressure on, and have created new dynamics within, the host communities: existing vulnerabilities have been accentuated and the poorest socio-economic sectors have been disproportionately negatively impacted. The macro-economic impacts are negative, severe and increasing. These factors are likely to exacerbate domestic and regional tensions.

The RDPP has a significant role to play in stabilising the precarious economic situation, in forging the transition from assistance to development, and in promoting economic development strategies which support host and refugee communities equitably.

### **3.3. Social sector situation of refugees and affected host communities**

**Health** -The influx of Syrian refugees, who generally have access to primary health care if they are registered, has overwhelmed already overstretched health service sectors. The impacts are evident in increasingly problematic **access to existing primary healthcare** for both refugees and their hosts and a substantial **deterioration in the quality** of health care services for the national populations of the three countries.

**Education** - The label 'A Lost Generation?', highlights the gravity of the education and protection situation facing Syrian refugee children. The education services in the affected countries are under enormous pressures.

Refugee school-age children have **rights to education** in local schools. However, many children drop out of school, or never enrol, in order to work to support their families' livelihoods: this is a major concern for the future of the children and the long term development prospects for Syria upon their return. Amongst other **priority issues** are: access and attendance; curriculum and the language of instruction; the traumatising of children; the limited capacity of schools to absorb the large number of refugee pupils combined with the stress on teachers.

**Conclusions** - Arising from pressure on services, tension between the host communities and the refugees has implications for the quality of refugee protection.

Under conditions of protracted displacement, scaling up the capacity of public services will improve the refugees' livelihood opportunities during exile and on eventual return to Syria.

For the host community, stemming the decline in the quality of service provision is important in protecting their living standards.

## **4. Protection analysis**

Only a few reports provide a comprehensive overview of protection risks and the protection challenges. Focused mainly on Jordan and Lebanon, the reports are often anecdotal and limited to reporting on refugee-host tensions. Protection issues for Syrian refugees dominate, but the particular vulnerability of Palestine and Iraqi refugees from Syria are highlighted.

#### **4.1 Security and conflict spill-over threats and border restrictions**

Host states are concerned by **cross border violence**, the associated **increasing risk of sectarian violence and divisions**: these concerns have implications for the protection of the refugees. Lebanon's political and security environment has been the most impacted. **Access to cross the borders** is the most pressing protection concern for refugees. Periodic border closures put the protection of refugees at risk. Jordan and Lebanon regularly **deny entry** to Iraqi refugees from Syria and other groups without regular identity papers and together with Iraq regularly deny entry to Palestine refugees

#### **4.2 Lack of legal status and related risks (refoulement, detention, repeated displacement)**

Most individuals fleeing Syria are **unaware of their rights and obligations** and those that are irregular remain unaccounted for and are increasingly marginalised and vulnerable.

In **Jordan** Syrians may enter with a passport and do not require a visa or residency permit. Under certain conditions they can reside in urban communities. However, the retention of identity documents in some circumstances is a protection concern. Possession of a UNHCR card is key to access assistance and local services; but refugees fall out of status and lose access. Failure to register is significant due to lack of information, security reasons and fear.

In **Lebanon**, a residence permit is required, valid for six months and six months renewal. Subsequent extension is unaffordable by most refugees, stripping them of their legal status.

In **Iraq**, there is a vacuum in the protection framework and uniform practice across the governorates is lacking. These conditions limit freedom of movement and restricted access to work, services and housing.

Palestine refugees coming from Syria (PRS) are particularly vulnerable, falling between highly restrictive residency conditions and the severely stretched resources of UNRWA.

**Arrest, detention and deportation (refoulement)** are reported in the three countries and possibly increasing with the growing numbers with an irregular status. In Jordan, refugees, mainly Palestinians, report conditions of arbitrary detention. Syrians residing in Lebanon are reportedly rarely deported, whereas forced return to Syria is a protection risk in Jordan.

**Repeated displacement**, as refugees move around the country of asylum or engage in circular migration to Syria, increases protection risks and vulnerability and intensifies household vulnerability.

#### **4.3 Abuses and vulnerability in camps and urban settings**

Socio-economic factors and the lack of legal status increase **refugees' vulnerability** to a range of abuses. Forced and early marriages have reportedly risen compared to the pre-crisis period. Incidents of **domestic violence, SGBV and violence against children** are high in the three countries and risks are increased by crowded living conditions

There are specific protection concerns among the refugees in **camps** with women and girls, and people with disabilities and older persons.

In **urban settings**, the possibility of eviction carries significant protection risks, especially as local authorities in some areas have started to crack-down on refugees working informally.

The **longevity of the crisis** has also accentuated the vulnerability of host communities, and tensions between refugee and host communities exacerbate related protection risks.

## **Conclusions**

Refugees in the three countries face many common protection concerns. The role of the RDPP in developing protection capacities thus serves a vital need to ensure that protection gaps and, overall, the practice of protection, is made more consistent and effective.

The meta-analysis provides a firm evidence-base for conflict-sensitive Fast Track Interventions (FTIs) to mobilise the development-led strategies of the RDPP and underpin the protection needs of the refugees. The FTIs provide a 'value added' contribution to the RRP6. The FTIs will ensure that the RDPP contributes to the national strategies, supports the RRP's quest for convergence between humanitarian and development interventions, and an approach which balances the needs of the refugees and the affected host populations.

## **5. Implementation and proposed fast-track interventions**

Apparent from the meta-analysis is that much of the 'Impact analysis and baseline studies' envisaged in RDPP Component 1, has been superseded by the extant studies conducted in the region. The meta-analysis provides a working evidence-base on which to propose FTIs and implementation strategies.

### **5.1. Developing the evidence base on costs and impacts, and protection challenges**

Building on the evidence base, several themes are proposed for further study: labour market dynamics under conditions of severe economic shock; structural impacts of the refugee crisis on regional trade; coordination and alignment of international aid with national development strategies; review the potential of national level, multi-donor trust funds; explore the interplay between livelihoods insecurity and protection risks; community-based protection strategies.

### **5.2. Costs and Impacts and Livelihoods**

#### ***Development interventions***

Fast Track Interventions are proposed to:

- Formulate and implement a trial programme of locally targeted and innovative Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), in partnership with local authorities, private sector organisations and CBOs, to deliver labour intensive projects in refugee-populated areas
- Support the development of micro-enterprise finance mechanisms
- Provide economic assistance to refugee households to support school attendance, vocational and skills development training
- Support cash for work programmes
- Target actions to vulnerable groups and both refugee and host communities

#### ***Linkages with national plans and macro-economic policy development frameworks,***

A Fast Track Interventions is proposed to provide technical support to the national government ministries to strengthen macro-economic development planning capacity in order to facilitate short-term stabilisation and longer-term recovery and resilience planning.

#### ***Advocacy***

FTIs are recommended to:

- Support the shift towards market-based programming for refugees
- Ensure that the host population is not disadvantaged by the increasing purchasing power of refugees
- Advocate registration procedures for the right to work and establish business for refugees
- Support improved household and livelihood vulnerability assessment and selection criteria

### **5.1. Protection**



A comprehensive protection framework is in place, but the quality of protection is variable and requires the scaling up of operational and programme capacity. The RDDP cannot tackle all the issues highlighted in the meta-analysis. Instead, the FTIs provide 'value added' in specific aspects noted below.

### **5.3.1. Safeguard and enhance the quality of asylum and protection space**

A key task is to strengthen the underlying structural characteristics and capacity of the refugee protection systems in order to safeguard and enhance the rights of refugees and embed a rights-based orientation within the governance structures of the countries.

FTIs aim to:

- Build the capacity and quality of protection systems by training and sensitising members of national security forces, including the police, and government officials on the concepts and practices of refugee protection
- Facilitate the secondment of staff to support development of comprehensive strategies for refugee reception and protection
- Conduct advocacy with relevant stakeholders for the rights of refugees
- Support local civil society groups working in the field of human rights and refugee protection

### **5.3.2. Establish stronger legal benchmarks for refugees**

The FTIs address some specific gaps in the legal framework by encouraging relevant authorities and agencies to:

- Provide documents to Palestine and Iraqi refugees clarifying their legal status and enabling them to access services
- Identify and locate remaining unregistered refugees
- Desist from practices of deportation/*refoulement*
- Desist from arbitrary detention

### **5.3.3. Promote respect for refugees' rights**

These FTIs aim to prevent violations and abuses towards refugees and reduce vulnerability:

- Undertake further research on the interplay between livelihoods insecurity and related protection risks for camp and non-camp refugees
- Implement community-based protection facilities and strategies
- Conduct large-scale information campaigns on domestic violence, SGBV and violence against children
- Advocate for gender perspectives to be incorporated into all humanitarian and development programmes
- Advocate for the involvement and inclusion of host communities in services and infrastructure provision for refugees

## 1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in 2011, over 2.390 million people had fled Syria by mid-January 2014<sup>1</sup>. The accelerating speed and intensity with which the refugee crisis unfolded throughout 2013, and the prospect of the refugee population in the region exceeding four million by the end of 2014, confirm this refugee crisis to be the largest, most complex and most profound for several decades. The extensive physical destruction and economic collapse caused by the civil war within Syria and the religious and ethnic characteristics of the conflict itself, signal that the refugee displacement will be protracted, adding to the already severe negative social, economic (both macro and micro), and developmental impacts on neighbouring host countries.

The sixth inter-agency Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP), approved in November 2013, appealed for US\$ 4.2 billion to cover the 2014 humanitarian and developmental programme for the refugees and their host communities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Within this context, the European Union has prepared a three year Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for three of the host countries – Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. These countries currently shelter 1.64 million, or 70% of the 2.340 million Syrian refugees in the region. The RDPP covers two specified programme areas - the costs and impacts of displacement on refugees and their host countries (including associated socio-economic development issues in the health and education sectors), and the protection provisions and needs of the refugees. The purpose of the RDPP is to provide value-added support to the RRP through targeted interventions.

The current report is a desk study commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Denmark (the lead partner of the RDPP). It provides a *mapping and meta-analysis* of studies – listed in Appendix 2 - prepared by humanitarian and intergovernmental agencies, donors, the three refugee hosting countries of the RDPP and think tanks, conducted since 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

Reliant on multiple, secondary data sources, the meta-analysis does not present new or original findings. Rather, the objectives of this report are to present:

- a systematic assessment of the findings of these studies that constitutes a focused and triangulated evidence-base related to the principal themes of the RDPP; and
- a platform from which to launch the RDPP with a series of Fast Track Interventions (FTIs) – outlined in section 5.

Following the ToR, and detailed in Appendix 2, the *methodology* for the meta-analysis, comprised:

Task 1 – Sourcing and categorising reports –202 sourced documents from 1.1.2013. of these 183 were from the designated start date of 1.3.2013 and 163 have been analysed

Task 2 – Baseline mapping, standardised summary analysis and triangulation of

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<sup>1</sup>On 17.1.2014, 2.341 million people were registered as refugees

content and findings of reports on the socio-economic and protection situation for both refugees and hosting communities in respect of the RDPP programme areas.

Task 3 – Meta-analysis and report writing

Task 4 – Creation of an on-line data-base to be hosted at the Danish MFA

There are several important methodological and other caveats to this report.

First, this meta-analysis condenses the analysis of a large number of reports of the refugee impacts and protection issues in the three countries. These studies cover different refugee populations – urban, rural, encamped - different countries, different time series, varying samples and survey methods and different data sets. Caution is needed in comparing across such diverse sources.

Second, although there is consistency and correlation between the findings of many of these reports, often the reports ‘recycle’ evidence from preceding evaluations, situation reports and agency surveys, rather than conducting primary data collection and analysis. Where possible we have gone back to the original sources.

Third, many of the agencies whose reports have been analysed operate within the constraints of the national government-approved mandates. These conditions may circumscribe, in some situations, the scope and depth of the reports.

Nevertheless, taking these three caveats into account, the meta-analysis provides a satisfactory reasonable triangulation of the evidence base.

Fourth there is a limited range of relevant studies from the Kurdistan Region Iraq(KR-I), reflecting both the smaller number of refugees in that region and also the more limited presence of the UN humanitarian programme and other agencies.

Finally, the meta-analysis retrospectively covers almost a year of a very fast moving and escalating crisis. To this extent, the recent situation on the ground inevitably differs in degree if not in the main directions derived from the analysis of reports some of which are up to 10 months old. However, within these inevitable limitations, the meta-analysis provides a sound and relevant baseline on which to base FTIs and the RDPP programme development.

## 2. General regional and country overview

In a region already hosting millions of Palestine refugees and those from the Iraq war, the unprecedented scale of the crisis of refugees from Syria, its protracted nature, the spill-over effects on the economic, social and human development inside Syria but also in the neighbouring countries, and the complex and far reaching regional consequences are straining the resources and capacities of neighbouring governments and the international humanitarian system to their limits.

All three countries, despite the enormous pressures on their public services, have generally kept open their borders with Syria, although there are occasional closures in all three countries and more sustained border closures with Iraq. Both the countries themselves and their host populations have displayed both significant solidarity towards the refugee populations, regardless of the complex political dynamics of the region, and a keen awareness of Islamic and humanitarian obligations, although none of the three countries is signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention or the 1967 Protocol. A number of reports indicate an increasingly 'ambivalent hospitality' amongst the host populations and that the remarkable tolerance is now reaching breaking point as a consequence of the profound, cumulative social, economic and security impacts generated by such a large refugee population.

Alongside the humanitarian concern for the increasing, multi-dimensional vulnerability of the 10 million displaced Syrians (both the refugees and the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)), there are severe current and longer-term impacts on the developmental and economic strategies of the host countries, their social cohesion and service delivery capacities which were already fragile in pre-crisis conditions. These impacts will be experienced for many years. An indication of the scale of these impacts is illustrated in Table 1 which shows that: i) almost half the total targeted population for assistance in the three RDPP countries in the 2014 RRP is from the host population - 2.5 million compared with 2.85 million Syrian refugees; and ii) the significant proportion of actual and projected refugees, compared to their national populations.

*Table 1: Refugee and national populations*

	Refugees (1.1.2014)	Refugees (projected 12/2014)	National Population (million)	Refugee % of National Population 1.1.2014	Projected Refugee % of National Population 12.2014	Targeted host population 2014*
<b>Jordan</b>	576,354	800,000	6.5	9.14	12.30	700,000
<b>Lebanon</b>	858,641	1,650,000	4.3	19.97	38.38	1,500,000
<b>Iraq</b>	210,612	400,000	33.7	0.6	1.19	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,645,607</b>	<b>2,850,000</b>				<b>2,500,000</b>

Source: 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP 6), 11 December 2013

\* ie targeted in the RRP 6

Since 2011, the humanitarian programme has been instrumental in meeting the immediate protection and assistance needs of the refugees. The RRP for 2014 maintains this strategy. It involves the Governments of Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, 76 international NGOs, 18 national NGOs, 13 UN agencies and IOM, as well as representatives of refugees and host communities. Included within the scope of the plan are 3.44 million non-camp

refugees, 0.66 million camp refugees and no less than 2.76 million people from the host communities.

But as the crisis has evolved and its regional impacts have become more profound, the needs to design longer-term developmental responses and to include affected local populations in the response have increased proportionately. Thus RRP 6 provides an increased focus on early recovery and social cohesion interventions. It signals, but does not fully apply, a transition from assistance to development, recognising that the severe social and economic situation of the refugees, the impact on host communities, and the increasing tension between the refugees and local people, should be addressed through 'a development lens' which can benefit both the refugees and host communities. In this 'developmental' context, the European Union's RDPP provides an important instrument to: promote the transition strategy; drive the convergence of humanitarian and developmental programming; facilitate economic stabilisation in the affected countries; and support key interventions that will assist mobilisation of a developmental approach to the refugee crisis.

Amongst the key priorities of the RPP in the five host countries, and relevant to the RDPP are: maintaining and strengthening protection space (including child protection and SGBV); the "A Lost Generation?" initiative which includes education; addressing needs of host communities; and linking with national plans and development. Reflecting these priorities, the proportions of expenditure in the main programme sectors of the RPP relevant to the RDPP, are: protection 13% (second only to food at 28%); health 11%; and education 9%.

The poor health status of newly arrived refugees and acute malnutrition amongst under-five refugee children is a growing concern across the region, given the collapse of Syria's health service, putting severe pressure on national primary care health services. In terms of education, evidence suggests that large numbers of children have been out of school for much of their time in exile, that many families rely on their children to support household livelihoods and that, nevertheless, capacity in local schools is overstretched.

**Jordan**, with a population of 6.5 million and already hosting 1.9 m Palestinian refugees and 30,000 registered Iraqi refugees (perhaps as many as 160,000 unregistered), has received just over 570,000 refugees from Syria, the second largest number in the region. Although the encamped refugee population has fallen sharply during the crisis (only 75,000 were registered in Za'atari camp in November 2013), by the end of 2014 it is anticipated that 25% of the refugees (200,000) will be accommodated inside the camps and 75% outside camps (600,000), a modest readjustment of the current ratio of 20:80. The quality of protection concerns and arbitrary detention are matters of concern. That the vast majority of the refugees live in the community reflects the generosity of Jordanian neighbours in urban and rural areas, and the stance of Government of Jordan (GoJ). However the consequence is severe pressure on service capacities (notably health, education and water supply) and considerable social and economic impacts on the host population and the macro-economy. There is some evidence of rising tension between the host population and refugees and increasing crack downs on refugees working. In this context many of the planned interventions of the RPP 6 in urban areas will benefit both refugees and Jordanians living in the same areas.

**Lebanon** has received over one third of the refugees from Syria but, compared with other host countries, this constitutes a much high proportion in relation to the domestic population, of whom it is estimated that 1.5 million are impacted. In addition Lebanon already hosts 450,000 Palestinian refugees and 50,000 Iraqi refugees, and by the end of 2014 is projected to receive an additional 100,000 Palestine refugees from Syria and 50,000 returning nationals. The Government has resisted construction of refugee camps, allowing the refugees to settle freely (in over 1,500 localities), although the majority is concentrated in the northern half of the country: mobility is not restricted. As a result, the self-settled refugees depend heavily on support from local communities and aid agencies: overcrowded living conditions and deepening poverty are endemic. There is evidence of substantially rising tension between local host population and the refugees, with labour market competition being a source of significant concern. Despite periodic attempts to close the borders, there is significant movement back and forth for trade.

**Iraq** There are contradictory aspects in the situation of refugees. Access to territory is problematic, especially for non-Kurdish Syrians, and border closures are intensifying, and movement within Iraq is increasingly restricted. Although the number refugees in Iraq is both relatively and absolutely much lower than in other countries of the region, conditions of entry and circumstances for the refugees within Iraq are generally more restrictive, although the majority are able to work legally and have the right to health and education (limited in practice). Virtually all the refugees are located in the three governorates of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) where they live in sub-standard accommodation and are vulnerable, though less so than in Lebanon for example. The practice of issuing residency permits (and thus the right to work) for registered refugees differs somewhat between governorates; but it is anticipated that the government will resume issuing residency cards soon. Yet, despite all these constraints, Syrian refugees are crossing for trade purposes and many are working in the booming economy of the country. Significantly, the dire economic difficulties within Syria have impelled more recently arrived refugees as much as the direct violence which was the principal cause of refugee flows until early/mid 2013. Some 40% of the Syrian refugees in Iraq are hosted in camps, whilst over 60% reside in local communities. Conditions in the camps and the quality of services are generally good. Although there are no conflicts with the local population, security concerns are growing which, together with the strain of local public services, are driving the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to partially restrict refugees from settling in urban areas and to set up more camps. Recently there has been an accelerating trend of spontaneous return to Syria: some 20,000 opted to return in response to the difficult conditions of asylum, the lack of freedom of movement, as well as family reunion and for trading purposes. Protection needs, are also problematic but perhaps less severe than in other parts of the region.

### 3. Analysis of cost, impacts and socio-economic status of refugees and host communities

Reports on the costs and impacts of displacement on the Syrian refugees themselves, the host countries and their populations, as well as the livelihood conditions, vary in detail and the quality and rigour of data collection, survey methods and analysis. Taken together, however, these reports on the unfolding scope and role of the humanitarian relief programme provide reasonable baseline data and findings which give direction and focus to the RDPP.

This part of the report deals with these issues in three sections. The first examines the situation of the refugees themselves, in particular their livelihood conditions; the second deals with the impacts on the host populations, including micro-economic and the fiscal and macro-economic impacts, whilst the third section focuses on the social sector situation of refugees and affected host communities comprising analysis of the health and education sectors.

#### 3.1. Economic impacts on refugees and their livelihoods

The costs and impacts of displacement on the Syrian refugees themselves constitute a substantial body of evidence in the reports that were scrutinised. They are predominantly micro-economic analyses with a particular focus on livelihoods. Varying from detailed, local, community-based field assessments and questionnaire surveys to the wider examination of, for example, the urban refugee population in Jordan, the general findings of the assessments reveal that: income generation activities are scarce; in most refugee households expenditure needs are significantly outstripping income; and that livelihood sustainability, cost of living and rent levels (alongside food security), and increasing indebtedness are issues of major concern for the refugees – as they are for the local communities. In sum, household vulnerability is increasing.

The *livelihoods* of the refugees are under growing pressure and the *income-expenditure gap* for refugee households is substantial and increasing. Against an average household income of US\$250 per month for Syrian refugees in Lebanon average cash spending was US\$520/month - food and rent accounting for US\$500. Similarly, in Jordan, the average shortfall between income and expenditure across the whole survey population was JD185 (US\$260) and is rising. One study reports that up to 86% of Syrian refugees in Iraq say they have insufficient household income, 16% of those surveyed had no source of income. Household expenditure mainly comprises rent, food, utilities, drinking water, transportation and communications. The same study found that 75% of the refugees named food as their most pressing need, whereas 13% identified shelter (ie rent levels), and 12% health care and non-food items as their main needs. Whilst other studies present different levels of concern, these three basic needs for households appear consistently.

Many Syrian refugees find casual and irregular work in all three countries, predominantly in the unskilled sectors of both the formal and the informal economies, for example in farm labour, domestic service and construction, where they are able to undercut the prevailing wage rates of the local labour force. The main source of income for 50% of the refugees surveyed in a study in Lebanon was daily work. For those who find work, daily wages are the norm but they are exploitative, reported in Jordan to be around JD2-4 US\$3 to US\$6), even

though minimum wage labour law is JD5 (US\$7). Thus the refugees are typically paid less than their Jordanian counterparts, and it is not uncommon for refugee children to work.

Refugees reported inconsistent, informal employment, typically working six days per week, an average of 10-12 hours per day, with an income of JD100-150 per month (US\$140 - US\$210) (much lower than the average Jordanian income). The amount and the payment for daily work have decreased over recent months, given increasing competition induced by the supply of refugee labour vastly exceeding demand. In Lebanon, day labourers are fortunate if they find 2-3 days of work per week, and wages for them have fallen from US\$33 per day to US\$20 per day since the onset of the crisis. Moreover the seasonal nature of agricultural labour means that in winter months the income expenditure gap is rising substantially.

Analysis of the studies of refugee employment suggest that about 30% of the working age population are in paid, sporadic, employment, although there may be under-reporting as working without a permit is 'illegal' (except in KR-I where a residency permits suffice) and, in any case, most employment is in the informal sector and similarly 'illegal'. Downward socio-economic mobility is evident: in general, respondents having had higher level, skilled jobs prior to displacement whilst now the majority find that the jobs available require unskilled labour. There is some evidence that refugees are setting up their own (probably illegal) businesses - very visible in the refugee camps, less so outside the camps. That there is not more business activity is not altogether surprising for three reasons. Setting up a business requires costly and complex registration. Second, and for this reason, there may be under-reporting of business activity. Finally, and most obviously, rising household indebtedness means there is no spare capital for investment. These findings indicate the need for nuanced development strategies that can capture the entrepreneurial skills of the refugees, not just the provision of mass employment.

Thus, the refugees are receiving very low pay for their labour and if they are fortunate enough to find employment, their income is unpredictable. The *ad hoc* nature of food and financial assistance from humanitarian actors adds to the stress faced by increasingly vulnerable households, preventing them from being able to plan their household finances and food consumption effectively. A study in Lebanon revealed that a considerable proportion (21%) of Syrian households did not have any member providing income. This finding seems typical of refugee households in the other impacted countries. Clear priorities are a) the need for more stable income sources and b) improved access for all households to income generating employment.

As a result of these contingencies, the refugees remain heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance such as UNHCR cash support, food and non-food items (NFIs), although the assistance is insufficient to cover household needs. A variety of ***coping strategies*** are deployed to bridge the income-expenditure gap in order to cover essential household expenditure such as rent and the purchase of household needs: but these are becoming more risky and subject to increasing strain as the number of refugees increases and opportunities for casual work and wage rates diminish with an ever expanding labour supply. Amongst the main coping strategies are: borrowing money; reliance on social networks; selling donations from CBOs and rations from humanitarian agencies; decreasing food intake; reducing other expenditure; taking children out of school either to work or to save on supplementary costs; marrying girls and young women early and engaging in



transactional sex (discussed further in section 4.3 on protection); moving (often a number of times) to smaller and cheaper housing, and/or moving in with friends or extended family, sometimes in overcrowded, insecure, or unhygienic conditions.

However, the main source of income to cover the gap in household expenditure derives from the sale of personal assets (gold, property in Syria, household goods). Asset sale has also been used to get out of Syria and to be bailed out of the camps in Jordan. This extensive reliance on savings leads to their rapid depletion - on average, one study found that savings had been consumed within six months of arrival.

With a widening gap between income and expenditure, and the depletion of personal savings, **indebtedness** is both widespread and increasing, according to a number of studies. One survey has found that some 72% of urban refugee households in Jordan were in debt, with an average household debt of just over JD500 (US\$700), whilst a study in Lebanon found broadly similar impacts with some 77% of households in debt with an average debt US\$454.

The exhaustion of accessible assets and savings, and rising debt levels are accelerating the impoverishment of the refugee households, increasing their dependency on assistance and their vulnerability. A recent assessment in Jordan concluded that some 40-45% of households were 'extremely vulnerable'

The **urbanisation** of the majority of refugees in all three countries is a significant factor in their livelihood situation and how they experience the costs and impacts of their displacement. In Iraq, for example, notably in northern KR-I where most refugees reside given the more favourable economic and security conditions, the majority of the refugee population is located in urban communities. In the main urban areas in which refugees reside, some are well integrated, given the initial generosity and Kurdish ethnicity, and are engaged in the urban economy. Even so, they are more vulnerable, exposed to exploitation and experiencing a widening income-expenditure gap, especially due to the high rents. The livelihoods of encamped refugees present a similar dichotomy. Business activity is high yet many refugees are vulnerable with very limited resources and no employment. And with growing fears that the refugees in urban areas constitute a security risk there is pressure to encamp more refugees.

In Lebanon a similar picture emerges. Refugees in 'camp-like' tented settlements are more reliant on humanitarian assistance and on daily work than the refugees living in other types of shelter. This is partly explained by the very fact that the majority of the refugees in the tented settlement are more recently arrived and have not yet been able find work in Lebanon.

Jordan presents many of the same contrasting characteristics. With the majority living in urban and peri-urban locations, mainly in the north of the country, households are becoming more vulnerable as livelihoods come under increasing pressure; yet some refugees are able to engage in the urban economy. And, as in the refugee camps in Iraq, evidence of high levels of business activity sits alongside widespread incidence of vulnerable and livelihoods under great pressure.

Specific ***vulnerabilities of women and children***, as a result of the changing labour dynamics of refugee communities, feature in many studies of livelihoods and costs and impacts. The conclusions of many studies point to the increasingly significant (and changing) role of refugee women, especially in female-headed households, in livelihood strategies and income generation. These findings point to the need for gender awareness in development-led strategies that seek to enhance income sources and employment for the refugees.

Equally, the studies point to the rising incidence of child labour as refugee households resort to more desperate measures to diversify income sources and stave off indebtedness. One study in Lebanon reports that 15% of households surveyed cited child labour as their primary source of income. Syrian girls in particular are more likely to work when they are very young. Many school age children have had to discontinue education in order to work, the implications of which are discussed further in section 3.4. In conditions of protracted displacement and without the enhancement of income earning possibilities for adult members of households, the situation of the 'lost generation' of children who are compelled to work to prevent destitution of their families constitutes a major challenge for development programming.

***Refugee registration*** and ***registration for the right to work*** are important determinants of livelihoods and vulnerability and bear on issues of protection examined in section 4. Registration is a central concern of the refugees since it constitutes the major access point to government services, such as health and education, and humanitarian assistance. On the other hand, a significant number of refugees remain unregistered due to security concerns, lack of information with implications for access to services for refugees and for their protection.

The three countries have somewhat different policies and practices in relation to the right to work, but in general their stance is to restrict access to work.

Syrian refugees have no legal entitlement to work in Jordan without a work permit. Yet in practice the government does not grant permits to Syrians, except in a very small minority of cases, and it appears that even this possibility may be in the process of being withdrawn. The work permit process is reportedly both time-consuming and costly - JD275 (US\$390) - and there appears to be little common understanding of how it works amongst refugees. Jordan's labour laws do not cover workers in agriculture, domestic service, and family owned businesses. Migrants and refugees are thus not covered by minimum wage laws or social protections/benefits. Despite the legal limitations, as we have seen, significant numbers of refugees (almost all of whom are male) are able to find work, predominantly illegally in the informal sector and thus vulnerable to exploitation. Given the increased competition for work, there have been some crackdowns by the police and local labour inspectors to prevent Syrian refugees from working without work permits in parts of Jordan.

In Lebanon, a work permit is required for all Syrians, but in practice the government does not issue them. In reality, as in Jordan, a large proportion of refugees work illegally. Even before the crisis, acquiring work permits has been difficult for Syrians, as they were considered to be in competition for Lebanese workers and often received lower wages. Given the intense labour market competition, noted above, between Lebanese nationals and

the huge number of refugees, this is becoming a significant source of community tension and a source of concern for the protection of refugees.

In the Kurdish areas of Iraq, refugees can work legally if they have residency permits. In other areas of the country refugees who are confined to the camps cannot work.

Although their numbers are small, the situation of *Palestine and Iraqi refugees* must be highlighted. The secondary displacement of both groups from Syria, because of the conflict, has made their situation especially vulnerable.

Large numbers of Palestine refugees have been denied access to the three countries and the case of Jordan exemplifies these issues. Jordan has restricted entry since 2012. As for Iraqi refugees living in Jordanian, the authorities have increasingly indicated that many could now return to Iraq. Yet, the security risks of returning to many parts of Iraq remain severe.

For those that have gained entry, livelihood conditions are highly constrained, alongside particular protection concerns in the camps, and these are discussed in section 4.

Livelihoods for Palestine refugees from Syria now resident in Lebanon are, similarly, far more challenging than other refugees. They do not have automatic rights to employment in Lebanon. They lack the legal rights and informal social networks to access employment and the economic lifeline this might offer. Moreover, Palestine refugees had generally saved less money and had fewer disposable assets than Syrian refugees before entering Lebanon since unemployment amongst this population was widespread. It is estimated that only 10% of Palestine refugees from Syria are in any kind of employment in Lebanon, earning very low wages.

Palestinian refugees from Syria are provided with services under the mandate of UNRWA and can access UNRWA facilities, for example for health and education; and the level of assistance should be, in principle, the same as for the UNHCR registered refugees. However, their overall livelihood situation is one of intensifying vulnerabilities because of the greater difficulty they confront in accessing income generating opportunities than for the Syrian refugees.

### **Conclusions**

Like their hosts, as we shall see in the next section, the livelihood conditions of the Syrian refugees are chronic and under enormous and increasing pressure. The vulnerability of refugee households is both deepening and becoming more entrenched. Indeed, given the increasing impoverishment of the refugees, it is unlikely that this generation will ever recover their previous economic well-being. At the same time, the rapidly rising number of refugees intensifies competition for work, depresses wages for the fortunate few who find employment and, by putting more pressure on the host countries' economies already struggling to cope with the impacts of the refugee influx, further diminishes the likelihood of sustainable development.

In this context the RDPP has a fundamental role to play as an instrument to assist the promotion of development-led strategies, to facilitate a substantial external injection of

development capital and to steer the implementation of programmes which can generate significant employment for refugees (and host populations).

### **3.2. Macro and micro impacts on host countries and populations**

The evidence from virtually all the relevant reports for the three countries emphasises that the overall economic impact of the Syrian crisis and refugee influx is negative, widespread and severe. Living standards and livelihood conditions for the host populations, notably poorer socio-economic categories and the poorer neighbourhoods where the refugees have tended to settle, are diminishing through a combination of capacity-stressed public services on the one hand and negative economic conditions on the other. The pattern and incidence of the economic shocks is consistent across all three countries, although there are variations between countries depending on their pre-existing economic conditions. The main parameters of these impacts can be summarised as follows in terms of micro- and then macro- economic outcomes.

#### ***The micro-economic impacts***

First, the crisis has had a very detrimental impact on **public services**. The refugee influx in the three countries has vastly increased demand on services, such as health care and education (both examined below in more detail), water and electricity supply and waste disposal. Substantial capacity shortfalls are widely noted which impact not only the daily living conditions and environment of the host population but also affect economic production and output.

Second, **housing rent levels** are rising steeply: for example rents in Lebanon were reported to have risen by 44% between June 2012 and June 2013. Whilst this is not an argument for encampment, the steep rise in rent levels correlates with the excessive demand over supply created by the fact that the majority of the refugees are not-encamped. Negatively impacted both local populations and the refugees, there is some evidence that poorest Lebanese and Jordanians are unable to pay the rent increases or rent property when they marry, and are being forced to leave areas to make space for refugees. Refugees are often able to pay higher rents because several families are prepared to share overcrowded or unsatisfactory accommodation.

Third, **labour markets** have been deeply affected by the refugee crisis, especially given the relatively limited economic diversity of the three countries and the pre-existing lack of income-generating activities. The surge in labour supply generated by refugees, despite some restrictions on the refugees' right to work, has produced strong competition between nationals (and in some cases extant migrant labour) and refugees in both the formal and the large informal sectors of the countries' labour markets. In order of magnitude, the intensity of these pressures is strongest in Lebanon, then Jordan and then KR-I. There is evidence that refugees who are unregistered work illegally on low wages, accentuating the decline in job opportunities for local workers. These factors have caused substantial spikes in unemployment on the one hand; at the same time, they have depressed wage rates and employment opportunities for, mainly, low-skilled labour amongst the local work force— for example in farm labour, domestic service and construction, which typically rely on day-wage labour and are sectors of the economy in which refugee labour is especially competitive. Moreover in locations where refugees form a significant proportion of the local labour market, the competition for employment is particularly keen. Increasingly vulnerable local

populations are struggling to find employment, where wages in the agricultural sectors in Lebanon, for example, have decreased 50% in the last two years, whilst wages for unskilled work in Jordan have dropped as low as JD 150 (US\$210) per 30 days. Overall, in Lebanon, unemployment has increased from 8.1% in 2010 to 10.6% in 2012: the rate is expected to rise as the supply of unskilled refugee labour increases. Similarly high unemployment rates prevail and are rising in Jordan – in 2012 overall unemployment was 11%.

Fourth, at the same time, **market prices** for basic commodities and food have increased with substantial demand from the large number of refugees living in the community. Although the refugees are heavily dependent on humanitarian aid, those that are registered with UNHCR have access to cash transfers/vouchers and other assistance to supplement their daily living requirements. As a result, their purchasing power in local markets compares advantageously with local households, accentuating the livelihood vulnerability of an increasingly large number of local households. Simultaneously, in Jordan, the removal of subsidies on basic services and foodstuffs, as part of the structural readjustment programme, has added further price pressures on domestic household budgets.

It is clear that these pressures on rent levels, wages and prices, even without the additional impact of the declining quality of public services, are having a **severely detrimental impact on household livelihoods**, pushing a very substantial number of (mainly, low income and already poor), households into impoverishment. Female-headed households in all three countries are the most severely affected by this deterioration in living standards.

For example, in June 2013, over a quarter of the Lebanese population was already living on less than US\$4 a day (the poverty threshold), and with decreasing wages and increasing costs, their conditions will only worsen with the rising number of refugee arrivals. Whilst the lowest income groups are hardest hit, the existing relatively poor will face deepening vulnerability as well. Indeed, the impact of the refugee influx on Lebanon's economy has been devastating and a World Bank study estimated that this will push another 170,000 Lebanese into poverty by the end of 2014.

Although there is limited quantitative economic evidence for Jordan and Iraq, similar negative impacts prevail. In Jordan, and absorptive capacity of the urban economies in the north of the country, where the large majority of refugees reside, is close to exhaustion since refugees are concentrated in areas that already display some of the highest poverty rates among Jordanian citizens.

### ***Fiscal and Macro-economic impacts***

In all three countries, the ensuing economic and social consequences of the enormous refugee influxes have been extensive and multi-dimensional, with profound impacts on their development trajectories and economic wellbeing. Without creative and sustained national development planning and external assistance, the propensity for these negative impacts to continue is high.

In terms of macro-economic impacts, again there is consistent, though uneven, evidence of the negative impacts of the refugee crisis, entailing large losses in terms of economic performance, public revenue and taxes, profits, private consumption and investment. In relation to the **national economy**, the most detailed macro-economic analysis has been

conducted in Lebanon where a World Bank-UN assessment indicates that the impact of the refugees will: cut real GDP growth by 2.85% p.a. between 2012 and 2014; double unemployment to over 20%; and widen the national deficit by US\$2.6 billion. The Syrian conflict will have cost Lebanon US\$7.5 billion in cumulative economic losses (declining revenue collection due to fall in GDP, decline in domestic economic activity for example declining revenue from tourism, lost trade and investment, additional costs incurred for borrowing to support increasing demand for public services adding to the deficit and increasing public debt) between 2012 and 2014.

Approximately US\$1.4-1.6 billion is needed, in Lebanon, until the end of 2014 to stabilize and restore access and quality of health, education and social safety nets to pre-conflict levels, predominantly in urban locations. Other macro-economic impacts are: both the level of bank deposits and FDI have decreased by half in Lebanon; consumer confidence has decreased significantly, with both local and foreign investors less inclined to pursue new projects; and the 2012 inflation rate was estimated at 6.5% compared to 5% in 2011.

Second **regional trading patterns and dynamics** have been severely disrupted by the conflict, impacting import and export performance and commodity prices for consumers. Syria was a transit hub for agricultural goods and a source of cheap(er) agricultural inputs (e.g. subsidised fertilisers and feeds), the supply of which has been lost. Across the impacted countries, the disruption has caused a spike in both export and import costs, while at the same time the demand and prices for many foods have also risen, negatively impacting the incomes of host communities, which are predominantly agricultural and poor. Moreover, the population in the region has historically relied on cheaper Syrian consumer goods and social services, as well as engaged in smuggling activities and informal border commerce for their living – these opportunities have also been lost.

In theory, whilst short term impacts are negative, one might expect an overall positive adjustment in the economies of Syria's neighbours as substitution effects and local production replace the output previously occupied Syrian producers and manufacturers. Very little macro-economic evidence has been found to assess this option. Paradoxically, for the time being, exports from Lebanon to Syria have increased significantly, and for the first time Lebanon has a positive trade balance with Syria. Aside from this peculiar side-effect, the short and, in particular, the long term dislocation of international trade will further exacerbate declining investment, rising unemployment, commodity shortages and the like.

Lying behind these direct economic impacts are the less tangible negative impacts on the domestic economies stemming from the insecurity and uncertainty generated by the conflict. Increasing economic instability exacerbates the **unstable political and security situation** in all three countries, rendering them more vulnerable to the spill over effects of the conflict in terms of domestic political instability, polarisation and sectarian conflict on the one hand and, on the other, occasional armed clashes (in Lebanon), improvised explosive devices (IED) and shelling which is frequent in some (border) areas.

Notably in Lebanon, with its extremely diverse religious, ethnic and political structure, but also in the other affected countries, tensions between local communities and between host populations and refugees are likely to increase, further exacerbating the economic fragility of these countries. Likewise in this context, although the refugee population in Iraq is much

lower than other countries in the region, it has disproportionately higher effects on the country's continuing insecurity and instability, leading to consequences that could potentially spill over the Iraqi borders.

These intangible impacts are likely to be as significant as the direct impacts and will have protracted negative effects on investor and consumer confidence, further reducing economic activity and placing public finances under increasing pressure.

Perhaps surprisingly, disaster can also be a **development opportunity** and there is some evidence of positive, though mostly short-term, effects of the influx of Syrian refugees on the economies of Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon. For example, the positive effects include the increase in availability of cheap (especially unregulated, informal sector) labour, and rising demand and consumption derived from refugees. The arrival of refugees has been a boon for large-scale agriculture, but harmful to small holders and local farm labour, as we have seen.

These trends have particularly benefitted landlords, local traders, business and retailers, contractors in the construction industries, suppliers of goods and commodities to the humanitarian programme (such as prefabricated refugee shelter, food, water equipment and so on). In Erbil, in Iraq, the arrival of Syrians has bolstered the labour market by bringing in new skills and capacities. The incomers include educated professionals such as engineers and doctors, in addition to skilled construction and craft workers.

Individuals also benefit from the refugee influx as the arrival of aid agencies has injected money into the local economy and created job opportunities across both the professional and unskilled labour market.

Moreover, as the productive capacity of Syria diminishes as a result of the war, there is some evidence that Lebanese and Jordanian exports have replaced some Syrian exports. Thus in Lebanon industrial exports increased by 13.5% between in the year June 2012-2013. Revenues for the Port of Beirut increased by 26% in 2013, as regional traders increasingly relied on Lebanese merchants and infrastructure. There is some evidence that the influx of Syrian refugees has accentuated, albeit temporarily and in a small scale, the growing KR economy of the KR-I. Outcomes such as these are attributable, at least partially, to the crisis.

### **Conclusions**

In sum, and paralleling the analysis of the economic and livelihood situation of the Syrian refugees, the micro-economic impacts have put increasing pressure on, and have created new dynamics within the host communities. In general, existing vulnerabilities among the local populations, prior to the Syrian refugee influx, have been accentuated. The poorest socio-economic sectors have been disproportionately negatively impacted and, given the limited and declining quality of service provision, their vulnerability has been further accentuated.

On the macro-economic side, despite some evidence of positive impacts, the outcomes are unsustainable. Even if middle class and wealthy sectors of the host societies are benefiting from the refugee influx, the poorest and the most vulnerable are experiencing the negative impacts. The overwhelming evidence points to severe, and continuing, negative impacts on

already fragile economies in all three countries. These factors are likely to exacerbate both internal tensions and tensions between hosts and refugees.

These outcomes point to the significant role which the RDPP will play in stabilising the precarious economic situation of the three countries, in forging the transition from assistance to development, , and in promoting economic development strategies which support host and refugee communities equitably.

### **3.3. Social sector situation of refugees and affected host communities**

#### **3.3.1. Impacts on the health sector**

Given the inherent weaknesses of the health care sector in all three countries, with low capacity and weak infrastructure, the influx of Syrian refugees has overwhelmed their already overstretched health service sectors, in particular the provision of primary health care. Such an outcome is hardly surprising given that the substantial majority of refugees live amongst their host communities and thus use the same health care facilities<sup>2</sup>. Under particularly acute pressure from the huge increase in demand are primary care centres and hospitals situated in border areas, or in locations with high refugee concentrations.

Accordingly, across all five countries of SRRP 6, 1.5 million Syrian refugees will be assisted with primary health care services and 653,000 Syrians with secondary and/or tertiary health care. A target population of 460,000 camp-based refugees, 2.050 million non-camp refugees and 955,000 members of the host community population is envisaged in SRRP 6. Over 21 million people will be immunized against polio.

**Access to existing primary healthcare** facilities and services is available to registered refugees (but not those who are unregistered) in the affected countries, with costs usually reimbursed from UNHCR. In Lebanon, for example, due to lack of funding, UNHCR covers hospital bills only in life saving situations. Nevertheless, refugees reportedly struggle to access health services in general, and there are specific problems of access in some locations, for example, in border areas (noted above), where capacity limits are grossly exceeded, and in the central and southern governorates of Iraq due to restrictions associated with their residency status. Access to secondary and tertiary health is limited and is increasingly restricted. Reportedly, some refugees who cannot afford to treat chronic conditions have risked returning to Syria to get treatment, as well as to give birth to ensure Syrian nationality, and then return to Jordan afterwards. However, given the collapse of the health care sector in Syria, this process is likely to decline and it is noted that, for the same reason, refugees arriving in the last few months are generally in poorer health than earlier arrivals. However, with growing numbers a more targeted approach to the provision of health care for the most vulnerable is more evident, thus many refugees now have to cover some or all of their costs.

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<sup>2</sup> This section deals only with non-camp health sector issues. In terms of camp provision in Za'atari camp, Jordan, primary healthcare is provided in three field hospitals and a paediatric hospital and treatment is free. Secondary and tertiary health care needs are referred to hospitals outside the camp.



Mass immunization is now needed, for example, for polio, since there is low immunization coverage: this is a key objective of RRP 6. A sharp rise in communicable diseases is reported and new diseases not previously present. Moreover, the poor-quality of housing, overcrowded living conditions, especially for non-camp refugees, malnutrition and lack of access to, or poor quality of water, are triggering health-related concerns.

There is a substantial **deterioration in the quality** of already hard-pressed health care services for the national populations of the three countries. This is a major, and obvious, consequence of the inability of the humanitarian effort to keep pace with the speed and complexity of the demand pressures. Host communities are affected by long waiting periods, overburdened care staff and drug shortages. For example, in December 2012, 40% of primary healthcare visits in Lebanon were by Syrian refugees. One clinic serving 3,000 residents must now serve 13,000 with the refugee influx. As current services struggle to cope with the additional demand, hosts perceive that the Syrian refugees may be getting preferential access and treatment. Conversely, refugees report difficulty in accessing health care. Such contradictory accounts are symptomatic of the stress which the health care sector is facing in all three countries. Yet, even so, some NGO health care providers charge refugees preferential consultation fees compared to host community patients which accentuate tensions.

Amongst the **priority health care needs**, in many cases for both the host populations and the refugees, the following have been highlighted in the reports analysed.

**Service provision:** There are concerns around the cost and availability of medicines. There are localised shortages of specialised health care staff, pressure on equipment and resources, and a severe reduction in drug stocks.

**Medical care and clinical needs:** Access to, and affordability for the treatment and medication of chronic diseases is increasingly problematic. Pregnant women and those with acute neo-natal medical conditions are a particular concern including emergency obstetric care. Reproductive health care, especially for refugee women who are not registered, require continuing prioritisation. Access to medical services for refugees with complex or acute medical or surgical needs is highly constrained and there is widespread inability to access the more specialized healthcare services from private health care providers that are not provided by public health facilities. Another challenge is to provide sufficient tertiary medical care – eg for cancer, thalassemia, haemophilia, and chronic renal failure care, finding strategies that will help close gaps in the current health care system- which are not covered in the UNHCR system. The health care needs of the elderly, an often forgotten group, are increasing, with a higher prevalence of tertiary health care needs and disability, growing mental health conditions, inability to afford medication, difficulty in reaching health centres. For those with mental health and disability needs, survivors of trauma, and SGBV survivors, health care provision is available only sparsely and is often of rudimentary quality. Traumatic experiences, particularly amongst children, have created widespread psychological problems among the refugees: but these are not adequately addressed.

**Health care management:** Medical record keeping of patient care and referrals is poor – with impacts on both patient treatment and epidemiological analysis of the incidence of health conditions and changing care needs. Security threats to hospital staff are reported

leading to staff withdrawing from treating refugees. Refugees living in remoter areas have to travel long distances to access medical care, but this can be difficult given the impoverished condition of the refugees and the pressure on household finances discussed in section 3. 1.

### **3.3.2. Impacts on education sector**

The label '**A Lost Generation?**', highlights the gravity of the education and protection situation facing Syrian refugee children, and the priority strategy of the SHARP and SRRP 6 in retrieving their loss. The reasons for this priority are clear. During the 2012/2013 school year, it was estimated that 90% of Syrian refugee children aged 6 to 17 were not attending school in Lebanon, (although more recent surveys suggest that non-enrolment may have declined to 75-80%), whilst in Iraq only 10% of Syrian refugee school-age children living non-camp settings are participating in formal education. Moreover, non-attendance is protracted. Even in Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, where formal education is provided, some 76% of girls and 80% of boys do not attend school. Yet, by contrast, a study of Syrian refugees in Iraq found that 76% of the children surveyed were attending school in Syria before they became refugees – those not engaged in formal education at that time were largely in the 15+ age group.

Currently, up to 66% of the 735,000 school-age refugee children across the five affected countries are not enrolled in school and, given that the number of children living as refugees is expected to exceed 2 million by December 2014, non-enrolment will rise substantially without major interventions.

With regard to education, the situation of the refugee and affected host communities' children in the three countries under review, closely echoes the analysis of the health care sector in the three study countries<sup>3</sup>.

The **education services** are under enormous pressures of severely stretched capacity in school facilities, teaching staff, and associated resources. Some indication of these pressures is evident in Lebanon, where 150,000 Syrian refugee children are expected to enrol in schools in the academic year 2014. This number will constitute over half the number of public school students in Lebanon, yet this excludes almost two thirds of refugee children not expected to enrol in formal schooling.

Across the five countries of SRRP 6 for 2014, 266,000 children in camps, 407,000 in non-camp settings and 710,000 children in the host communities are targeted for assistance. Almost 750,000 children will be supported in attending formal education, 246,000 children will benefit from psychosocial support activities in education settings and 115,000 educational personnel in host communities will benefit from training and capacity activities.

In terms of **rights to education**, the Ministry of Education in Lebanon permits Syrian students who have registered with UNHCR to enrol in public schools for reduced fees. However, education is largely private in Lebanon: the public sector reaches only 30% of Lebanese students and is this not well-positioned to expand. Syrian children registered with UNHCR can also enrol in public schools in Jordan. In Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional

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<sup>3</sup> As before, this section deals only with non-camp education sector issues.

Government and the Iraqi Government allow Syrian children to register free of charge in public schools. There are also basic schools in the refugee camps.

However, although they are afforded access to public educational facilities, reports on this sector indicate that refugee children still face many challenges and barriers in all three countries. Most worrying is the fact that many children drop out of school, or never even enrol, in order to take up casual work to support their families' livelihoods, as noted in discussion of section 3.1. Syrian girls in particular are more likely to work when they are very young.

For those who do attend, or wish to attend, there are other issues highlighted below.

**Access and attendance:** Refugees report that, despite the right to attend public schools in the three countries, as with access health care services, registration is problematic. Syrian refugee families report being turned away from some classrooms. In addition transport and other school-related fees, such as school materials and uniforms school, are often unaffordable and this puts pressure on already stressed household budgets or leads to children to be taken out of school altogether. In some cases attendance by female children is considered unsafe.

**Study and the curriculum:** A number of issues are highlighted in reports that have been analysed. Many Syrian refugee students drop out because of difficulties in the language and this is also the case in the other countries where the refugee children are not proficient in the dominant language of instruction. The Syrian refugees are also concerned whether the national certification from the country where they are receiving education will be recognised upon return to Syria.

Children may have been traumatised by their experiences and there is little expertise and few resources to tackle learning difficulties associated with depression, anxiety and other psychosocial issues. Moreover, schools are becoming outlets for the conflict manifest in adverse behaviour such as bullying or inequitable treatment. Finally there are concerns that the curriculum is inadequate, since the children attend local schools that are not dedicated to their specific needs and the Syrian curriculum.

**Resources and facilities:** The most pressing problem for those that do attend school, a major deterrent for those who do not and, of course, a major concern for host populations, is the limited ability of the state schools to absorb the large number of additional refugee pupils. The education systems have struggled and the lack of space and infrastructure is mirrored in the enormous stress on teachers' abilities to provide adequate instruction for large numbers in overcrowded conditions. Double-shifts in Jordan (to accommodate the influx of Syrian students) have meant overcrowded, understaffed classrooms and half-day sessions. In Lebanon, schools also remain open for a second shift to accommodate additional students, but the government is unable to pay additional teacher and administrative costs.

### **3.3.3. Conclusions on health and education social sector situation**

Clearly, there are many programmatic challenges in providing health and education social services to the Syrian refugees and their host populations which SRRP 6 addresses. However beyond this, the analysis highlights three generic issues that are particularly relevant to the RDPP.

First, the acute pressure on the delivery of health and education services is a potential source of tension between the host communities and the refugees. There are implications for the quality of protection for the refugees and threats to their well being discussed in the next section.

Second, under conditions of protracted displacement, scaling up the capacity of public services is necessary for several reasons. Improved health and education services, for example skills and vocational training, will improve the refugees' livelihood opportunities and reduce household vulnerabilities during exile and on eventual return to Syria.

Third, for the host community, the declining quality of services, in combination with the pressures on their livelihoods reported in section 3.2, increase household vulnerability. In this regard, stemming the decline in the quality of service provision plays an important role in protecting the hard pressed living standards of the host populations.

#### 4. Protection analysis

There are surprisingly few reports providing a comprehensive overview of protection risks facing those fleeing the Syrian conflict and the protection challenges they encounter once in the countries of asylum. A number of reports nevertheless address specific protection concerns especially gender-based violence and child protection. There is a knowledge gap in protection issues in Iraq since the majority of the reports address protection concerns in Jordan and to a lesser extent in Lebanon. Reports also mainly focus on protection concerns faced by Syrian refugees but some highlight the particular vulnerability of Palestine refugees from Syria and to a lesser extent of Iraqi refugees from Syria. While the socio-economic impact of the refugee on hosts is well covered, analysis over protection concerns faced by host communities is much more anecdotal and often limited to reporting on tensions between refugees and hosts.

Whereas protection is often included within the broader humanitarian assistance, the RDPP offers an opportunity to also frame protection within a development approach thus seeking to build a sustainable protective environment for the displaced.

This part of the report deals with three key inter-linked protection challenges, namely: restrictions over access to the countries of asylum; refugees' fragile legal status and related vulnerabilities; and some specific human rights abuses affecting refugees in general such as protection risks specific to camps or urban settings, as well as specific challenges faced by non-Syrian refugees.

##### 4.1 Security and conflict spill-over threats and border restrictions

Due to the sectarian nature of the Syrian conflict, and the historic ties between Syria and the neighbouring countries, there is a serious risk of conflict spilling over to the other countries in the region. Host states are concerned by ***cross border violence***, and the associated ***increasing risk of sectarian violence and division*** and thus the protection regime for the refugees which this raises.

Of the three countries in the study, Lebanon's political and security environment has been the most impacted by the conflict and the country has politically been divided between those who support the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and those who support the Syrian opposition. This division has caused political violence and clashes leading to deaths and bombings. Furthermore, fighting in Syria across the border with Lebanon, especially in Qalamoun, has led to the mass arrival of refugees in Aarsal and to the spill-over of the conflict into the Lebanese border region, with frequent shelling and security incidents. Hezbollah's participation in the battle has caused retaliatory attacks against the group on Lebanese soil and the Aarsal region, considered as both a base for opposition fighters as well as an important route for weapons and supplies, has become a target for the Syrian Armed Forces.

Armed operations in the border region of Iraq, where the refugee camps are located, have also raised security concerns.

***Access to cross the borders*** is the most pressing protection concern for refugees fleeing Syria. While the three countries broadly upheld open border policies at the inception of the crisis, the scale and prolongation of the conflict in Syria, combined with the fear of the

conflict spreading to their own territories, has resulted in more restrictive entry policies. Periodic border closures including in areas where borders had long been kept open such as the Iraqi Kurdish Region, where the majority of refugees are concentrated, have put the protection of refugees at risk. As a result of these restrictions, arrival rates may have decreased slightly only to cause an acceleration of the refugee flow once borders have temporarily reopened. It has also meant that people fleeing the conflict have been trapped on the Syrian side of the border as IDPs. In September 2013, people stranded along the Syria and Jordan border were estimated to be between 7,000 and 20,000 while according to NGO reports around 10,000 people waited to cross into Iraq.

Although conditions change from time to time, the Jordanian and Lebanese authorities regularly **deny or restrict entry** to: Palestine and Iraqi refugees from Syria; Syrians with damaged or no identity papers; individuals between 15-18 years old with ID but without parental authorisation; single men of military age with no proof of exemption from military service or who cannot prove they have family ties in Jordan; and to nomadic households. In Jordan the **restrictive policy towards Palestine refugees** was made official in January 2013, giving as rationale that the country did not wish to harm Palestinians' "right of return". As for Iraqi refugees, Jordanian authorities have increasingly suggested that they could now return to their country of origin despite evidence of severe security risks in many parts of Iraq.

As in the two other countries, Palestine refugees are restricted from entry in Iraq. Some reports suggest that they do not even try to enter the country as they know they will not be allowed entry.

#### **4.2 Lack of legal status and related risks (*refoulement, detention, repeated displacement*)**

None of the three host countries has signed the 1951 Convention and its Protocol and the legal status of asylum seekers and refugees is mostly governed by the countries' national laws concerning foreign nationals. Yet most **individuals fleeing Syria are unaware of their rights and obligations** and those that are irregular, meaning entering and residing in the host country without the required documents, remain unaccounted for and are increasingly marginalised and vulnerable.

In Jordan all foreigners, including Syrians, are subject to the country's Alien Law. Syrians do not require a visa or Jordanian residency and may enter the country freely provided they hold a passport. Those who arrive through the two official border points can reside in the urban communities. However, the retention of identity documents by the Jordanian authorities from refugees entering through unofficial border crossings is a protection concern. This policy restricts freedom of movement since they are encamped and can only legally leave the camp if they have been "sponsored" by a Jordanian to leave Za'atari camp.

Refugees can only regain freedom of movement and right to settle in urban areas through a bailout system which means that they must be sponsored by a Jordanian national. Refugees leaving the camps illegally (outside the bailout process) have reportedly paid over US\$500 per family to unidentified individuals. Refugees recognised by UNHCR do not have any particular status under Jordanian law and do not gain rights of residency or the right to

work.<sup>4</sup> The possession of a UNHCR card is however key to access assistance from the UN system; but as these cards must be renewed every six months, it is easy for people to fall out of status and lose access to many of the services normally available to them. Although many refugees come forward to register with UNHCR, mainly to access assistance, others do not register due to a lack of information, challenges to travel, or because of security reasons, including the fear that their personal information would be given to the conflicting parties inside Syria.

In Lebanon, a residence permit is a requirement to stay in the country. An individual holding a valid national Syrian identity card or a passport is given an entry stamp allowing residency for a period of six months and this permit can be renewed free of charge for another six months.<sup>5</sup> After one year, Syrians must apply for an extension with a fee of US\$200 which many cannot afford, stripping them of their legal status.

In Iraq, despite the existence of two laws that are relevant to refugees, there is a ***vacuum in the legal framework*** when it comes to the protection of the rights of refugees, and Iraq does not have a policy or strategy for refugees.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, protection policies vary widely from governorate to governorate and are not always consistent even in the same governorate. In the Kurdish Region, Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR/IOM and the Department of Displacement and Migration (DDM), receiving an asylum seeker certificate valid for one year and a temporary, free of charge residency permit, renewable after six months. However, from April 2013, the Kurdish Regional Government stopped issuing these residency permits in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah requiring all refugees to register (and live) in camps. In practice, many of them then are bailed out by relatives already living in KR-I. Around 20% of both refugees and returnees are reportedly not registered with the authorities. Without residency status, refugees have limited freedom of movement and restricted access to work and services; it is also hindering their ability to secure long-term housing.

***Palestinian refugees coming from Syria (PRS) are particularly vulnerable*** in Lebanon as they are entitled only to a seven-day visa valid for 15 days which can be renewed with a US\$17 fee for three months although in practice, PRS are able to extend their legal stay without renewal fees. However, PRS who have failed to renew their visas, or have entered the country irregularly, are at risk of not having access to Palestinian camps. UNHCR has been registering Syrians in Lebanon since April 2011; yet those who flee without documentation face greater difficulties in registering with UNHCR<sup>7</sup> (e.g. because of security reasons and difficulties to cross checkpoints to reach registration centres, lack of

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<sup>4</sup>The UNHCR in Jordan operates under a 1998 MoU and is responsible for RSD; only refugees who entered Jordan after January 2012 are eligible for UNHCR registration.

<sup>5</sup>There are five official border crossings between Lebanon and Syria, in addition to several unofficial crossing points.

<sup>6</sup>The 1971 Political Refugee Law does not officially recognise as refugees those who have fled their country due to persecution; the 2009 Law No.21 of the Ministry of Migration and Displacement that is responsible for displaced Iraqis and foreign nationals inside Iraq has a broader definition of refugees but does not clarify the rights of those protected or clearly define the responsibilities of the Ministry.

<sup>7</sup>Lebanon signed a MoU with UNHCR in 2003. However, as this MoU was not designed to govern large influxes of refugees it has not been implemented. A new MoU is reportedly under discussion.

information on the process and transportation costs). Similar to what takes place in Jordan, the UNHCR registration certificate, only enables access to assistance. UNRWA, for its part, is responsible for PRS, yet this caseload is reportedly only receiving a fraction of the international aid that other Syrian refugees are receiving as UNRWA, has not been able to secure sufficient funding to meet their assistance needs.

**Arrest, detention and deportation (refoulement)** are reported in the three countries especially as a result of the increased numbers of those staying in the country of asylum with an irregular status; yet there is little precise evidence or statistical data on this issue. In Lebanon, numbers of detained are very low and detainees are generally released after one or two days. Deportation orders, are not usually implemented and *refoulement* very rarely happens in Lebanon.

In Jordan, too, there is little hard evidence of *refoulement*, although it might be an increasing concern here and in Lebanon. In Jordan, refugees, mainly Palestinians who are confined to the Cyber City area and its immediate vicinity, are reporting conditions of arbitrary detention.

Syrians residing in Lebanon are reportedly rarely deported, whereas forced return to Syria has been identified as a major protection risk throughout the refugee population in Jordan. Protestors or perceived protestors, single refugee men, women refugees accused of “inappropriate” sexual relations, refugees accused of security offences, refugees working without permits and PRS have been among the hundreds of refugees from Syria in Jordan who have been forcibly returned across the border.

**Repeated displacement** within the country of asylum can be a coping strategy that can provide new opportunities for refugees to survive as well as a key protection issue that can also cause significant risks for them. In response to the dire economic situation they face or the need to find shelter and services, many refugees move from the camps to the towns, sometimes returning to camps when they can no longer pay rent. Some even return to Syria only to be displaced again. Risks and vulnerability can also be associated with the fact that refugees move to multiple locations in the country of asylum, including ‘losing touch with aid providers and disappear among the urban poor.’ These ‘protection gaps’ only serve to intensify household vulnerability and the difficulties of accessing income earning opportunities discussed in section 3.1.

#### **4.3 Abuses and vulnerability in camps and urban settings**

Socio-economic factors discussed in the first section and the lack of legal status increase refugees’ vulnerability to a range of abuses including **labour exploitation and forced begging**, consequences discussed in section 3.1. As children do not need work permits and are paid less, child labour is a rising issue, especially in urban areas or in large camps like Za’atari in Jordan; these outcomes are reflected in the critically low school attendance of Syrian refugee children noted in section 3.4.

Refugees are also particularly vulnerable to **human trafficking, smuggling and sexual exploitation** including prostitution and survival sex. Economic hardship is causing some women and girls to turn to transactional sex and there are reported incidents of service



providers withholding services unless sex is given. These activities are not only highly risky in themselves, they can also lead to reprisals from the families in the name of 'honour'.

**Forced and early marriages** have reportedly risen compared to the pre-crisis period. However, there is no firm evidence and some suggestion that the issue may have been presented out of its proportion. In any case, early marriage is a relatively common and acceptable practice in Syria and is perceived as a means of providing economic and physical security for a girl child. It is the economic and physical insecurity that, among other factors, has caused early marriage to increase in displacement. In Jordan, some Syrian women have reportedly married much older Jordanian men under the assumption that they would provide them with protection. Yet this is illusory because under Jordanian law, non-Jordanian Arab women married to Jordanian men must wait three years for citizenship. Another reported practice that has left refugee women and girls exposed to abuses is what is called 'temporary or pleasure marriages'.

Incidents of **domestic violence and SGBV** are high in the three countries and risks are increased by crowded living conditions and the fact that in the urban context several families can share the same dwelling. Female-headed households and unaccompanied refugees are particularly vulnerable. Because of the fear of retaliation, cultural sensitivities and stigma attached to SGBV as well as the fact that women and girls have limited access to social networks, and are unaware of their legal rights or the rights of their children, survivors often do not report violence, preventing access to assistance and response services. A GBV assessment among urban refugees in Jordan highlighted a massive knowledge deficit of GBV services and a preference to seek help from family instead of approaching the authorities or specialised/health services, or to remain silent.

As far as **violence against children** is concerned, the home is the place of highest risk for violence, both for girls and boys. Children are also in danger of violence both transiting to/from school and at school. And in addition, boys are in danger of recruitment into armed groups in Syria, often with parental consent. Sexual violence affects girls mainly, but there is evidence that sexual violence targets boys too. Sexual violence is not solely targeted at refugee children, boys and girls from host communities are also at risk for sexual violence.

Besides the overall protection issues faced by refugees some reports also identify specific **protection concerns among the (mostly Syrian) refugees in camps**. A fifth of Syrian refugees in Jordan live in camps. They are concentrated in Za'atari camp, where insecurity was a major concern but is now decreasing. In the absence of functioning community governance structures, the camp has been lawless, and organised crime networks and Syrian opposition groups reportedly operate and use the camp for their own financial and political objectives. One issue is that vast majority of refugees are from Deraa and belong to the Deraa family/tribe clans. Those who do not belong to them have reported aggressive attitudes towards them and have left the camp. There is concern amongst refugees at the regular occurrence of serious security incidents in the camp; in particular, tensions often escalate into violent disputes during food and other aid distributions. Second, life in the camp can pose particular difficulties for **women and girls**, such as feeling unsafe going to the communal toilet due to fears of sexual violence and harassment and facing obstacles to accessing services. Thirdly, people with **disabilities and older persons** are often among those most vulnerable in the camp.

In urban settings, the possibility of **eviction** carries with it significant protection risks, particularly for women and children. Evictions could increase numbers living in camps, informal settlements and temporary shelters, and increasing cases of destitution and homelessness.

Local authorities in some areas have also started to **crack-down on refugees working informally**.

Finally, a number of reports highlight how the longevity of the crisis has accentuated the **vulnerability of host communities**, many of whom have become as vulnerable as refugees themselves. As it has become extremely difficult for local communities to absorb the increasing numbers of refugees, **tensions between refugee and host communities** are clearly exacerbating related protection risks. As detailed in the above section, these tensions caused mainly by the competition over resources and services which are becoming over-stretched are aggravated, mostly, by the increased cost of living, decreased incomes, and misperceptions about aid delivery. Refugees are perceived to pose a threat to law and order, and these negative perceptions are getting worse as refugees without means are becoming more visible than before in the urban areas. The real (or perceived) lack of targeting international aid to the neediest members of the host communities is aggravating these tensions which are gradually triggering animosity which may turn into sectarian conflict.

#### **4.4. Conclusions**

Refugees in the three countries face many common protection concerns. As the conflict in Syria continues and the number of refugees is rising further there is an increased risk of tensions and violence spreading throughout the region. With more restrictive entry policies in place, flight options are limited and gaining safe access to asylum countries is a paramount protection challenge faced by refugees.

In the absence of legal frameworks for receiving refugees, notably in KR-I there are concerns over their status. As a great number of refugees enter through unofficial crossings they lack proof of legal stay. Many refugees are not registered with the authorities and/or with UNHCR because of a lack of knowledge or for fear of negative repercussions. Not being easily identified, they are prone to be excluded from aid and protection programmes and are at risk of falling victims to a range of abuses.

Refugees in camps and in urban areas are reportedly vulnerable to various forms of violence, exploitation and harassment.

While the above analysis focuses on protection concerns in the host countries, risks related to secondary movements-returns to Syria and to journeys to Europe- have also been noted, each with protection implications including abuses by illegal trafficking and smuggling networks.

## 5. Implementation and proposed Fast Track Interventions

Based on the mapping and meta-analysis of the preceding sections, this part of the report recommends conflict-sensitive Fast Track Interventions (FTIs) and implementation strategies that: provide entry points to the RDPP programming exercise about to commence; mobilise the four components of the RDPP<sup>8</sup>; engage development-led strategies to tackle the impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis; and underpin the protection needs of the refugees.

Rather than duplicating existing interventions, the rationale underpinning the proposed FTIs and implementation strategies is the 'value added' which the RDPP can bring to the already complex and wide-ranging programme of the RRP6.

The need to mainstream these proposals into national policies and legislation in partner countries is essential for several reasons. First, this will ensure that the RDPP contributes effectively to the national strategies established by the affected Governments - in Lebanon the Stabilization Plan and in Jordan the National Resilience Plan. Second, this will ensure that the proposed actions are consonant with the RRP's quest for convergence between humanitarian and development interventions, and an approach which balances the needs of the refugees and the affected host populations. Finally, this will ensure that the proposals align with the strategies and commitments of donors, UN agencies and NGOs set out in RRP6.

Some of the specified Actions and Expected Results of the RDDP, have already anticipated a number of the Fast Track Interventions. However the meta-analysis provides a secure evidence-base to confirm both their validity and the value of expediting their implementation.

### 5.2. Developing the evidence base on costs and impacts, and protection challenges

The RDPP envisaged the need to establish an evidence-base on: (i) the costs and social and economic impacts of refugees on host countries and communities, by conducting micro- and macro- economic assessments; and (ii) the current protection challenges.

However, it is now apparent from the meta-analysis, that Component 1 of the RDPP ('Impact analysis and baseline studies'), has, to a substantial extent, been superseded by the range of extant studies already conducted in the region and analysed in this meta-analysis. Indeed, by drawing together these studies, the meta-analysis itself provides a sufficient, if not fully comprehensive, evidence-base on which to propose FTIs and implementation strategies.

However, given the fast-changing dynamics of the crisis and its likely protracted character, there is the need to ensure that the evidence-base on costs and impacts and protection remains current. Such research would feed into the medium and longer term development-led strategies now being embedded in the host countries and would assist in sustaining delivery of the RDDP.

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<sup>8</sup> 1) The Impact analysis and baseline studies component  
2) The Protection component  
3) The Advocacy and Political Dialogue Component  
4) The Social and Economic Development component

In addition, the meta-analysis highlights significant gaps in the evidence base at a regional and also national level, which need to be addressed to enhance the national response strategies. Similarly, several aspects of the Protection Component of the RDPP require continuing research inputs.

Although some of the gaps are being explored by continuing research, further research studies are needed on the following topics to:

- improve understanding of labour market dynamics under conditions of severe economic shock; design and implement projects that enhance and diversify employment opportunities, income streams and livelihoods in impacted communities
- assess the structural impacts of the refugee crisis on regional trade, market adjustments and promote long term actions to stabilise and resuscitate the regional economy
- evaluate modalities for better coordinating international aid and aligning it with longer term stabilisation and resilience strategies that address the costs and impacts of refugees
- determine the impact of the withdrawal of electricity and fuel subsidies on economic instability and social cohesion in light of the refugee crisis
- review the role and potential of national level, multi-donor trust funds (currently being promoted in Lebanon and managed by the World Bank)
- investigate the impact of the international assistance provided to refugees in the region and of the role of international actors in supporting the development strategies of the host countries
- explore the interplay between livelihoods insecurity and related protection risks for both camp and non-camp refugees
- design improved community-based protection strategies

## **5.2. Costs and Impacts and Livelihoods**

### **5.2.1. Fast Track Interventions**

In line with RDPP Action 4 (*The Social and Economic Development component*) these Fast Track Interventions aim at promoting local economic development:

- Formulate and implement a trial programme of locally targeted and innovative Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), in partnership with local authorities, private sector organisations and CBOs, to deliver labour intensive projects of immediate economic benefits in refugee-populated areas. Private Public Partnerships with local investors could be considered. QIPs could include local infrastructure development, small scale construction/building materials enterprises, small-scale production/manufacture of household goods, business advice centres.
- In association with QIPs, support the development of micro-enterprise finance mechanisms, soft loans and grants to encourage small business development supporting, for example, home-based production which would allow households to develop sustainable livelihoods, enhance household assets and perform as economic multipliers in local communities.
- Provide economic assistance to refugee households - eg through conditional cash transfers to parents or needs-based scholarships - to support school attendance, vocational and skills development training.

- Support cash for work programmes such as public works projects to improve local infrastructure
- Target these actions to vulnerable groups - young people, women and female-headed households, Palestine refugees – who are increasingly marginalized in the labour markets

These interventions should include both refugee and host communities and should be targeted in localities where the presence of large numbers of refugees has most distorted labour market conditions and income earning opportunities.

### **5.2.2. Linkages with national plans and macro-economic policy development frameworks, Capacity Building at national levels**

This Fast Track Intervention supports national level capacity building for development planning, thereby addressing Action 4 of the RDPP (*The Social and Economic Development component*).

- Provide technical support to the national government ministries to strengthen macro-economic development planning capacity in order to facilitate short-term stabilisation and longer-term recovery and resilience planning

### **5.1.3. Advocacy**

These Fast Track Interventions support the implementation of Action 3 of the RDPP (*Advocacy and Political Dialogue component*).

- Support the shift towards market-based programming for refugees.
- Simultaneously promote macro and micro economic interventions to ensure that the host population is not disadvantaged by the potential increases in refugee purchasing power
- Advocate registration procedures for the right to work and establish business for refugees
- Support improved household and livelihood vulnerability assessment and selection criteria. Common approaches to vulnerability assessment and selection criteria should be established to avoid survey fatigue amongst targeted populations

## **5.2. Social sector situation of refugees and affected host communities - health and education**

Although these two sectors do not form part of the RDPP, the aim of the meta-analysis was to draw out, from the many programming challenges, the developmental and protection implications for the RDPP. No FTIs are proposed but advocacy on protection and scaling up the education and health capacity for refugees and their hosts is recommended.

### **5.3. Protection**

The meta-analysis of reports and studies of Protection indicated that although a comprehensive framework in place, the quality of protection is very variable within and between the three countries, and many aspects of the protection environment require improvement and the scaling up of operational and programme capacity. However it is not the aim, nor within the capacity of the RDDP to tackle the complete agenda of issues and operational needs highlighted in the meta-analysis. Instead, consonant with the underlying purpose of this section of the report, the aim of the FTIs is to provide ‘value added’ in important aspects of protection within a development-led response.

### **5.3.1. Safeguard and enhance the quality of asylum and protection space**

The key role which the FTIs can play is in strengthening the underlying structural characteristics and capacity of the refugee protection systems in the three countries through training, dialogue and advocacy. In this way the medium and longer term rights of refugees can be safeguarded and enhanced, whilst at the same time embedding a firmer rights-based orientation within the governance structures of the countries.

In this context, and consistent with RDPP Action 2 (*The Protection component*), the aim of these FTIs is to:

- Build the capacity and quality of protection systems by training and sensitising members of national security forces, including the police, and government officials on the concepts of refugee protection, access to protection, including *non refoulement* obligations
- Facilitate the secondment of staff to government offices to support authorities' in developing comprehensive strategies for refugee reception and protection, capitalising on existing best practices in the region
- Conduct advocacy with relevant stakeholders – at local, national and regional levels - for rights of refugees in, for example, freedom of movement, right to work, access to education and health care
- Support local civil society groups working in the field of human rights and refugee protection and facilitating their access to refugee camps and refugee-hosting urban areas to assess the human rights situation and foster protection

### **5.3.2. Establish stronger legal benchmarks for refugees**

In line with RDPP Action 2 (*The Protection component*), these FTIs address some specific gaps in the legal framework for refugees in the region. The FTIs encourage and support relevant authorities and agencies to:

- Provide documents to Palestine and Iraqi refugees arriving in asylum countries clarifying their legal status and enabling them to access services, without discrimination
- Identify and locate remaining unregistered refugees, and prioritise addressing their needs and status
- Desist from practices of deportation/*refoulement* and advocate for the suspension of further forcible and arbitrary return of refugees to Syria or other countries
- Monitor the protection needs of refugees in detention and desist from the suspension of arbitrary detention

### **5.3.3. Promote respect for refugees' rights in camps and urban settings**

In line with RDPP Action 2 (*The Protection component*), and also linked to RDPP Action 4 (*The Social and Economic Development component*) these FTIs are geared towards preventing violations and abuses towards refugees and reducing their vulnerability:

- Undertake further research, on the interplay between livelihoods insecurity and related protection risks for camp and non-camp refugees
- Implement community-based protection facilities and strategies (e.g. community centres that can be used by both hosts and refugees; volunteer networks drawn from the refugee population and partnerships with community-based organisations)
- Conduct large-scale information campaigns on domestic violence, SGBV and violence against children, including on the prevention of military recruitment of children, at community level and in schools

- Advocate for gender perspectives to be incorporated into all humanitarian and development programmes to reduce SGBV and other gender-related risks
- Advocate for the involvement and inclusion of host communities in services and infrastructure provision for refugees to create community ownership from the outset and reduce risk of emerging tensions

## Appendix 1 Methodology

### Task 1 – Mobilisation (sourcing and categorising reports)

# Preliminary identification of sources by web and contacts through the 'Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal' (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>), the 'Syria Evaluation Portal for Coordinated Accountability and lessons learning' ([www.syrialearning.org](http://www.syrialearning.org)) and the websites of individual organisations.

# A standard introduction message was developed to approach organisations and contacts.

# All relevant reports (in English) produced since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013, especially but not limited to assessment and survey mission reports, situation reports, policy and programme reports and evaluations, strategic planning and evaluation reports, analysis underpinning Regional Response Plans; budget documents were collected. However only reports produced after 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 were subsequently analysed.

# While the core of the research is on 'Syrian refugees' and 'host communities', reports addressing secondary displaced populations and the situation of non-Syrian refugees from Syria (e.g. Palestinian and Iraqi refugees) were also analysed. Reports on returnees were also considered (although they are not mainstream to the project or the RDPP).

# Documents were stored on Google Drive under the following main folders:

I- Inter-Agency (include the RRP and other inter-agencies reports);

II-UN/IOM (with sub-folders per individual agency);

III- International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC, IFRC and National Societies);

IV- NGOs (include INGOs and national NGOs);

V- Think tanks and research institutions;

VI- Regional governments (Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq);

VII- Donors countries and country development agencies;

### Task 2 – Baseline mapping (summary analysis and triangulation of content and findings of reports on the socio-economic and protection situation for both refugees and hosting communities in respect of the RDPP programme areas)

#The baseline mapping was done for each document or series of documents (e.g. for short monthly situation reports) as per a template developed for that purpose.

# The analysis covered the 3 programme areas at the core of the RDPP:

- Costs and impacts of refugees from Syria on hosts and the refugees themselves and livelihoods of both groups (don't report on incidence of disease, immunisation programmes, etc – i.e. the straight medical stuff; but do include info on impacts on health services at a macro level; also cover HLP/Shelter info where these deal with impacts on rent levels, property and land markets etc.)
- Protection situation and protection needs for refugees;
- Social sector situation for and needs of refugees and affected host communities (focus on health and education) (focus on the social services delivery to refugees and the hosts and for which the NGO/donor may be making provision).

#The bulk of the analysis was conducted by the 3 Research Assistants under the guidance of the Team Leader and

### Task 3 – Meta-analysis (report writing)

# The Team Leader produced the main sections of the report while the Policy Analyst wrote the protection section and reviewed the rest of the document (in turn, the protection section was reviewed by the Team Leader).The RAs were approached as and where needed for clarification/ additional information.

# Draft report submitted to Commissioning Agency and debrief in Copenhagen on 15 January. Comments were incorporated and a final document was sent out to the Danish MFA on 20 January (ahead of a Steering Group committee in Brussels on 27 January).

### Task 4 – Creation of an on-line data-base

# Creation of a user friendly web-based (static) project repository for the documents collected/ analysed.



## Appendix 2 Schedule of Reports

### Inter-Agency

Inter-Agency Standing Committee – IASC (December 2013), 'Early warning report: December 2013-May 2014', <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloaddoc.aspx?docID=6628&type=any>

IASC (July 2013), 'The Syrian displacement crisis: Gender alert', <http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/themes/gender>

Inter-agency (December 2013), '2014 Syria regional response plan (RRP 6)', <http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/>

Inter-agency (December 2013), 'Revised Syria regional response plan - RRP (all agencies): Funding status as of 9 December 2013', <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2013-12-09RRP5fundingtrackingallagencies.pdf>

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