



SDC's school rehabilitation project creates a better learning environment for children in communities hosting a large number of Syrian refugees. ©SDC

## Context

Lebanon is a small middle-income country which has been repeatedly exposed to regional conflicts and internal tensions, inter alia related to the country's sectarian-based political system. In addition, conflicting agendas of short-term governments and donor countries engaged in Lebanon constantly reshape the country's priorities.

Along with approximately 4.1 million Lebanese, the country counts some 450,000 Palestine refugees. Due to the Syria crisis, an additional 45,000 Palestine refugees from Syria currently reside in Lebanon. Palestine refugees do not enjoy full civil rights and are prevented from access to property ownership and carrying out as many as 20 professions. Around 53% of Palestine refugees live in 12 recognized refugee camps. There are also 42 unofficial "gatherings" where roughly 43,000 Palestine refugees live, alongside very poor Lebanese families.

The Syria crisis has put a huge strain on the country's already precarious stability, having suffered from weak infrastructure and public services. Of the 4 million Syrian refugees registered in the region, over 1.1 million are registered in Lebanon - making it the country with the highest per capita refugee population in the world. The socio-economic situation for Syrian refugees as well as the Lebanese, especially in local communities most affected by the influx, is becoming increasingly worrying. Tensions between refugees and host communities have risen due to increased competition for housing, jobs and services.

Lebanon also has a long history of immigration and remains a destination for temporary workers coming from neighbouring as well as Asian countries. Precarious labour conditions prevail for the majority of the 250,000 migrant workers in the country, for the most part women.

In terms of natural disasters, Lebanon is located along the seismically active Dead Sea Transform fault. The high concentration of inhabitants in cities such as Beirut and Tripoli exposes the country to significant risk in case of earthquake, flood or other natural disaster.

## Swiss Cooperation Strategy Middle East 2015-2018

The overall goal of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy Middle East 2015-2018 for Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria is to contribute to safe, viable and peaceful living conditions for the conflict-affected and vulnerable people, reducing fragility, preventing and transforming conflicts. The Strategy was developed in a "whole-of-government" approach, involving the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Directorate of Political Affairs (DP) and the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).

In order to achieve its overall goal, Switzerland focuses on three domains of interventions: Basic Needs and Services; Protection; Water. To contribute both to the transformation of relationships and the promotion of inclusive mechanisms within the societies, the transversal themes Gender Equality, Good Governance and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) are inherent parts of the strategy.

|                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Lebanon Population:</b>            | 4.1 million                    |
| <b>Refugee Population:</b>            |                                |
| - Syrian refugees:                    | 1.1 million (UNHCR 21.08.2015) |
| - Palestine refugees:                 | 450,000 (UNRWA)                |
| - Palestine refugees from Syria:      | 45,000 (UNRWA 30.04.2015)      |
| - Other refugees (mainly Iraq):       | 8,000 (UNHCR)                  |
| <b>SDC planned contribution 2015:</b> | CHF 9.1 million                |

## Domain of intervention 1: Basic Needs and Services

Switzerland seeks to save lives, reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience through improving access of the vulnerable populations to the basic needs and services. Self-reliance and coping mechanisms are to be enhanced while preparedness, response and rehabilitation mechanisms are to be fostered for addressing natural and man-made disaster risks.

Under this domain, Switzerland is involved in the following projects:

- UNRWA – *Assistance to Palestine Refugees*: Switzerland's annual contribution of CHF 21 million to the UNRWA General Fund supports the Agency in providing basic services to Palestine refugees in the region, including Palestine refugees from Syria.
- SDC Direct Action – *Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) Rehabilitation in Schools*: Providing a safe envi-

ronment for 7,950 Lebanese and Syrian refugee students in 27 public schools in the Akkar region.

- World Bank - *Multi-Donor Trust Fund*: Contribution to the Lebanon Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict by the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) to help mitigate the impact of the Syrian conflict on host communities in Lebanon.
- UNDP/UN-Habitat - *Building Structures*: Supporting the national framework to improve the coordination of plans and service delivery to Palestine refugees living in informal gatherings.
- Tahaddi - *Protection and services for marginalized Dom*: Supporting school enrolment of illiterate children and improving access to primary health services for vulnerable groups, including 10,000 members of the marginalised Dom community in Beirut's shanty areas.

#### Switzerland's Main Partners in Lebanon:

- United Nations Relief and Works (UNRWA)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Terre Des Hommes (TDH)
- World Bank
- Lebanese Red Cross Society (LRCS)
- Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC)
- Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)
- Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA)

### Domain of intervention 2: Protection

Switzerland seeks to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law and human rights and contribute to conflict transformation as well as to a protective environment for conflict-affected and vulnerable populations including IDPs, refugees and migrants.

SDC supports the following protection projects:

- Mouvement Social Liban - *Support and Socio-economic Rehabilitation of Juveniles in the Central Prison of Roumieh*: Transitioning the prison's punitive function into a role that enhances the socio-economic rehabilitation and reintegration of 160 youth back into society.
- Lebanon Support Association - *Humanitarian guidebook and knowledge base - Lebanon (2006 - 2014)*: Enhance knowledge and understanding of Lebanon's humanitarian context among national and international actors.
- Basmeh & Zeitooneh - *Psychosocial Support for Women and Children through Art & Creativity*: Increase protection among Syrian refugee women and children living in Lebanon, as well as members of the host community, through creative art forms.
- UNHCR – *Contributions 2015*: Providing immediate protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced people in life-threatening situations and underfunded emergencies.
- Terre Des Hommes – *Protection of the Most Vulnerable Children Affected by the Syria crisis in South Lebanon*: Psychosocial support activities, case management, referral services, community-based interventions centred

around Child Protection and Sexual and Gender Based Violence and capacity building of local government and civil society actors.

### Domain of intervention 3: Water

Switzerland seeks to enhance resilient, sustainable and conflict-sensitive water management. The interventions aim to increase access to safe water, sanitation and the efficient use of water for food production, to improve the basis for integrated water resources management as well as mitigating water-related disaster risks.

- Orontes River Basin - *Water Security Blue Peace Middle East*: Assessment of water resource usage in the Orontes River Basin and building on existing networks (academia, civil society and public institutions) in partnership with Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (LARI) and Litani Authority.
- UNRWA – *Water project*: Improving access to safe potable water in sufficient quantities at an affordable price for 70,000 beneficiaries in seven Palestine refugee camps.
- UNDP – *Support to host communities through WASH*: Providing water, sanitation and hygiene support to host communities to improve basic service delivery to Syrian refugees and host communities in Northern Lebanon.

### Transversal theme: Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

- UNDP - *Building national disaster reduction systems and management capacities in Lebanon*: In direct cooperation with the Prime Minister's office, to strengthen the National Disaster Risk Management capacities.
- Lebanese Red Cross Society (LRCS) – *Improving Major Casualty Incident Response in Lebanon*: Contribution by the FDFA Human Security Division to help reduce the impact of major incidents and improve local preparedness and response.
- Union of Tyre Municipalities – *Emergency Responsive Initiative*: 63 villages with a total of 320,000 persons are better prepared to respond to disasters and can better provide assistance.



### Further information

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